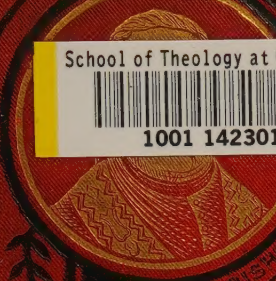
School of Theology at Claremont
1001 1423015



ARCHBISHOP CARR

ARCHBISHOP HUGHES

HISTORY OF THE WESTERN MISSIONS AND MISSIONARIES IN THE UNITED STATES

MRS. F. A. SETON

FATHER MATHEW

The Library

of the

School of Theology at Claremont

1325 North College Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711

Howes D289

Pierre-Jean De Smet (1801-1873)

Jesuit missionary to the Indians of the American West. His work takhim from Council Bluffs to the Oregon country and the Pacific Northwest. He was famous for his role as mediator in various Indian wars. To the Indians of the West he was known as "Blackrobe" —the ambassador from Heaven.

P. J. De Smet S. J.

Cage
Rare

E
78
W5
S6
1859

WESTERN

MISSIONS AND MISSIONARIES:

A SERIES OF LETTERS,

BY

REV. P. J. DE SMET,
OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS,
AUTHOR OF "INDIAN SKETCHES," "OREGON MISSIONS," ETC.

NEW YORK:
P. J. KENEDY,
EXCELSIOR CATHOLIC PUBLISHING HOUSE,
5 BARCLAY STREET.

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859,
BY JAMES B. KIRKER,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

CONTENTS.

DESCRIPTIVE LETTERS.

LETTER		PAGE
I.	Voyage from Belgium to Lima in 1844	13
II.	Journey to the Great Desert in 1849—The Prairies	26
III.	Journey to the Great Desert in 1849—The Mauvaises Terres	32
IV.	Journey to the Great Desert in 1849—The Ponkahs	36
V.	Journey to the Great Desert in 1849—The Ogallalla Chief	40
VI.	Journey to the Great Desert in 1849—Prospects of the Indians	51
I.	Appeal to Belgium	58
II.	Journey to the Great Desert in 1851—Death of Father Hoeken	61
III.	Travels in the Great Desert in 1851	69
IV.	Travels in the Great Desert in 1851	79
V.	Travels in the Great Desert in 1851	90
VI.	Travels in the Great Desert in 1851—The Great Peace Council	101
VII.	Travels in the Great Desert in 1851—Homeward Journey	112
VIII.	Voyage and Wreck on the Humboldt in 1853	121
IX.	The Letter of the Crazy Bear, Assiniboin Chief	130
X.	Religious Opinions of the Assiniboins	134
XI.	Indian Hunts	146
XII.	Indian Warfare	156
XIII.	Tchatka, the Poisoner, an Assiniboin Chief	168
XIV.	The Indian Question	206
XV.	Watomika and the Delawares	218
XVI.	Kistalwa and Maria, parents of Watomika	231
XVII.	Fire-worship	240
XVIII.	Four Tribes of the Black-Feet—Gros-Ventres, Pégans, Blood-Tribe, and Black-Feet Proper	253

LETTER		PAGE
XIX.	The Sioux—Father C. Hoeken's Letters	262
XX.	Tributes to the Flat-Heads—Pater and Ave in Osage	275
XXI.	Oregon Missions	280
XXII.	Indians of the Rocky Mountains	292
XXIII.	The Flat-Heads	295
XXIV.	The Flat-Heads—Father A. Hoeken's Letters	306
XXV.	The Potawatomies	319
XXVI.	The Potawatomies—Father Duerinck's Letter	330
XXVII.	Excursion among the Potawatomies	341
XXVIII.	The Osages—Father Bax's First Letter	350
XXIX.	The Osages—Father Bax's Second Letter	361
XXX.	The Osages—Father Bax's Third Letter	371
XXXI.	Conversion of Randolph Benton, son of Hon. T. H. Benton	373
XXXII.	Religious Situation of St. Louis and St. Ferdinand—Death of Father Bax—The Osages	378
XXXIII.	The Mormons	390
XXXIV.	Missions of Kentucky	398
XXXV.	The Ursulines of America	406
XXXVI.	Voyage of the Leopold I. from Antwerp to New York.	417

BIOGRAPHICAL LETTERS.

XXXVII.	Rev. Charles Nerinckx	424
XXXVIII.	Father Charles Felix Van Quickenborne, S. J.	464
XXXIX.	Father Theodore de Theux, S. J.	474
XL.	Father John Anthony Elet, S. J.	486
XLI.	Father John Baptist Smedts, S. J	492
XLII.	Father Francis Xavier d'Hoop, S. J	495
XLIII.	Death of the Right Rev. James O. Van de Velde	499
XLIV.	Father John Nobili, S. J	508
XLV.	Father Anthony Eysvogels, S. J.	520
XLVI.	Father John B. Duerinck, S. J.	521

PREFACE TO THE BELGIAN EDITION.

BY FATHER EDWARD TERWECOREN, S. J.

Charles Nerinckx, formerly parish priest of Everberg-Meerbeek, near Louvain, in Belgium, and early missionary of Kentucky, made two voyages to Europe to obtain pecuniary aid and fellow-soldiers for the conquest of souls in the New World.

In July, 1821, on leaving Belgium, which he was never again to see, he was accompanied by several Belgians—namely, Felix Verreydt, of Diest; Josse Van Assche, of St. Amand; Peter Joseph Verhaegen, of Haecht; John Baptist Smedts, of Rotselaer; John Anthony Elet, of St. Amand; and Peter John De Smet, of Termonde.

The last named, who had just attained his twenty-first year, began by this first voyage his long and perilous courses by seas and torrents, deserts and forests, amid whites and Indians—in a word, the

thousand dangers and privations which surround an apostolic man in his far-distant and solitary expeditions.

The bold and evangelical peregrinations of our fellow-countryman and brother in Christ have been crowned with the most consoling results for the Church, and by a necessary consequence for true civilization, which is effected by Catholicism. The apostolate of Father De Smet is pursued until this day with zeal and perseverance. Already, in 1853, his united journeys represented an extent of land and water surpassing five times the circumference of the globe! Since then he has crossed the ocean three times, and traversed immense countries. We offer ardent prayers that God may long preserve this untiring laborer in the vineyard of the Lord.

Following the example of his predecessors in the labors of foreign missions, Father De Smet has taken numerous notes concerning the countries he has visited. These notes, the result of profound study of men and things, have a bearing on several branches of science and the arts: Geography, Natural History, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Manners, Customs, Creeds—all are here. To be convinced of the extent and variety of these notes, as well as of the picturesque and curious adventures of the traveller, it

suffices to look at the contents, or glance through the volume.

Similar subjects have been treated in the preceding works of the missionary, of which we deem it useful to give the bibliography.

1. *Letters and Sketches, with a Narrative of a Year's Residence among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky-Mountains.* Philadelphia, published by M. Fithian, 1843. 12°, pp. ix.-252.

Voyages aux Montagnes-Rocheuses, et une année de séjour chez les Tribus Indiennes du vaste Territoire de l'Orégon dépendant des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, par le R. P. Pierre De Smet, missionnaire de la Compagnie de Jésus. Malines, P. J. Hanicq, 1844. In-12, pp. vi.-304.

Reis naar het Rotsgebergte (Rocky Mountains), door Eerw. vader De Smet, Belgisch zendeling in de Vereenigde Staten. 1840–1841. Deventer, bij J. W. Robijns en comp.

An edition in Italian, issued by Louis Prevete. Palermo, 1847.

2. *Oregon Missions and Travels over the Rocky Mountains in* 1845–46. New York, published by Edward Dunigan, 1847. 12°, pp. xii.-408.

3. *Missions de l'Orégon et voyages aux Montagnes-Rocheuses et aux Sources de la Colombie, de l'Athabasca et du Sascatshawin en* 1845–46, par le Père P. J. De Smet, de la Société de Jésus. Gand, Van der Schelden. In-12, pp. ix.-389. (L'approbation est de 1848.) Translated by Father De Smet.

Missiën van den Oregon en Reizen naer de Rotsbergen en de Bronnen der Colombia, der Athabasca en Sascatshawin in 1845–46. Door Pater P. J. De Smet. Gend, W^e^ Van der Schelden. In-12.

Missions de l'Orégon et Voyages dans les Montagnes-Rocheuses en 1845–46, par le Père P. J. De Smet, de la Société de Jésus.

Ouvrage traduit de l'anglais par M. Bourlez. Paris, librairie de Poussielgue-Rusand. A Lyon, chez J. B. Pélagaud et Cie. 1848. In-12, pp. 408. (Paris, imprimerie de Poussielgue.) A different translation from that issued in Belgium.

4. *Voyage au Grand Desert en* 1851, par le R. P. Pierre De Smet, missionnaire de la Compagnie de Jésus. Bruxelles, imprimerie de J. Vandereydt, 1853. In-18, pp. 436, tiré à part des *Précis Historiques* du P. Terwecoren.

5. *The Indian Missions in the United States of America, under the care of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus.* Philadelphia, King & Baird, 1841. 12°, pp. 34. Contains: *To the most Rev. Archbishop and Right Rev. Bishops in Provincial Council assembled.* Dated St. Louis, May 3d, 1830, signed P. J. Verhaegen. *Extract from a Letter of Father De Smet, missionary among the Pottawatomie Indians*, 1838, pp. 9–22. A letter from the same, dated St. Louis University, February 4th, 1841, pp. 22–34.

6. *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres* du R. P. De Smet, de la Compagnie de Jésus et missionnaire en Amérique, publiées par Ed. Terwecoren, de la même compagnie. Paris et Tournai, H. Casterman, 1858. In-12, pp. ix.-504.

Such are the principal publications on the thirty-seven years' journeys of the missionary of the Rocky Mountains. We hope soon to be able to complete and publish in the *Précis Historiques* a succinct table of all these expeditions, or an Itinerary of the Voyages and Missions of Father De Smet. This table, drawn up in chronological order, will contain the names of the places visited or seen successively since 1821, and some brief remarks, as well as the number of miles travelled.

We adopted as the motto of the work which we edit these words of Father De Smet: "Never have I remarked the least sign to alarm modesty." They show that the works of Father De Smet may be read by all without distinction. And although this correspondence relates to the gross and nomadic tribes, there is never a word which need alarm the most chaste, or excite a blush on even a virginal brow. "Never," says he, speaking of the amusements of the savages at Fort Laramie—"Never did I remark the slightest indication which could shock the most conscientious modesty!" These words are a lesson to those civilized men and pretended civilizers who style *savages* the unfortunate Indians, whose morality Europe does not possess.

May the reading of these interesting recitals arouse Catholics to contribute their aid to Foreign Missions, and promote in hearts of generous mould the vocation to the apostolical ministry!—there are so many souls to save.

How beautiful is the faith which produces those valorous missionaries! Armed with the sole standard of the cross, with no other compass than obedience, with no star of the ocean but Mary, they run fearlessly to their goal, which is the attainment of God's greater glory by the salvation of souls. They wait but for the opportunity of saving one soul, to

fly to unexplored countries, to ever-growing dangers of death. Strangers to the wealth, the honors, the pleasures of this world, disinterested in all their undertakings, they taste no other consolation amid infuriated waves, in frightful solitudes, in the primeval forest, than that of passing through them to do good. How efficacious is the grace of God! It creates heroes! To these apostolic men, the natural courage and strength which form noble characters and men of superior stamp will not suffice. All human qualities are powerless in accomplishing such vast designs, and in correspondence with the inspirations of those magnanimous hearts. Athletes of heaven, heralds of faith, missionaries of the everlasting Gospel, they take their weapons at the foot of the tabernacle, and derive their force from the flesh and blood of the Lamb.

ED. TERWECOREN,
Of the Society of Jesus.

Brussels, 3d of the month of Mary,
Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, 1858.

WESTERN MISSIONS, Etc.

Letter I.

Lima, 26th May, 1844.

Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:

Some time ago I wrote to you from Valparaiso; I now write from Peru. We arrived here the 11th inst., after a short and happy voyage from Chili. The distance is about 500 leagues (1500 miles). The ocean, appropriately called Pacific, was smooth and tranquil; the wind was favorable, not the slightest accident has troubled our minds during the passage; without taking in any of the sails which were unfurled at Valparaiso, and without deviating a single line from its course, our ship reached the road of Callao, which is about two leagues from Lima. On the day of our arrival I offered up the holy sacrifice, during which was sung the *Te Deum* to render thanks to the Lord for the signal favor which he had bestowed upon us. From Valparaiso I have sent your reverence a circumstantial account of our long voyage to this place from the mouth of the Scheld. As my letter may not have reached you, I shall here repeat the substance.

On the 9th January we prepared to leave the Scheld with

an eastern wind, for which we had waited twenty-eight days, and to enter the North Sea. Early in the morning two masses were celebrated on board. All was animation around us. Several other ships made preparation to leave, and the air resounded with the naval songs of the sailors, who in their respective tongues bade farewell to the road of Ramnekens. One of the ships, commanded by Capt. De Cock and crowded with German emigrants for Texas, was carried forward by the force of the wind and current, and struck the stern of ours. The cries of distress uttered by the passengers responded to the crushing of the timbers. Both ships sustained some injury, but all ended in reproaches and expostulations between the pilots. We were more frightened than injured. At 3 o'clock P. M. we put to sea. When opposite Flushing, Mother Constantine, Superior-general of the Ladies of Notre Dame, and the Superior of the houses of Namur and Ghent, took leave of their Sisters (all were in tears), and were put ashore. Like a noble steed impatient of restraint, the *Indefatigable* sprang forward, bounding over the limpid deep. We soon beheld another scene. Neptune exacted his tribute. Each passenger offered his libation to the implacable deity. The night was dark and stormy; the wind unfavorable. After passing Calais, we were in danger of being thrown on the coast of France. On the 13th we were in the neighborhood of Plymouth, and on the following day we entered the broad Atlantic. On the 20th we were in sight of the island of Madeira. The next day we had a calm,—the sea was as smooth as a mirror; the thermometer indicated nineteen degrees of heat (seventy-five of Fahrenheit). During the calm we received a visit from a neighboring ship. Five men approached us in a boat. We invited them to come on deck. They refused, alleging that, as they were bound for Marseilles, they would be subjected to the quarantine, unless they could declare on

oath that they had not been on board of any other vessel during the voyage. The steersman informed us that he had been captain of the French ship *La Félicité*, which had been wrecked on the African coast, and that the Ant (the ship that lay near us) had taken him and his crew on board. After ascertaining our longitude and asking some questions about France, they took charge of some letters and left us. On Sunday, 28th, the sea was so much agitated that we could not celebrate. On such occasions all received the holy communion. On the preceding Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, we had the happiness of offering up the holy sacrifice. It was also our custom to sing vespers on deck in the evening.

On the 1st of February we came in sight of St. Anthony, one of the Cape Verd Islands. On the following day, the Feast of the Purification, we assembled at nine o'clock P. M. to sing canticles and the litany in honor of the Blessed Virgin. Never, perhaps, have the Atlantic and Pacific oceans resounded as long and as regularly with the praises of this kind Mother, who is our hope and consolation in the dangers to which we are exposed.

> "We felt how she can calm impart,
> Who, though in heaven's supremest place,
> Bears—as on earth—a Mother's heart.
> We hoped that she would guard us—she,
> Bright Mother of Him who walk'd the sea."

On the 6th and 7th we had another calm, and the thermometer stood at thirty-five degrees (eighty-eight of Fahrenheit). It did not rise higher on the Atlantic, though I feared that under the line we would have had to suffer much from the heat. On the 10th we had ten vessels in sight. On the 13th, about eight o'clock P. M., we had a slight breeze, which brought a Dutch vessel near us. They approached

us with the sound of music, and the soldiers on board sang military songs, which formed a strange contrast with the litanies of the Blessed Virgin which we were singing at the time. We hailed each other: "From Rotterdam to Batavia," was answered by "From Antwerp to Valparaiso." On the 14th we were near the line. At night the sailors gave three shouts in honor of Neptune. A tar-barrel was kindled and called Neptune's fire. Soon after a gruff voice was heard from the mainmast, asking, "Captain, how many passengers have you?" "Twelve," was the answer. "Well, let them be prepared,—I am Neptune's envoy; to-morrow he will come in person to administer baptism to them." On the following morning a shout was raised: "Neptune! Neptune!!" We accompanied the captain on deck to pay homage to his marine majesty and his court. We found the sea-god accoutred in such a manner that any one would have supposed that he had undertaken to personate Pluto. His courtiers vied with him in grotesque apparel. They were all over besmeared with tar. The pretended deity began by promising the captain a prosperous voyage; after which, turning to me, he requested me to submit to the operation of the razor. As superior of the passengers, I promised to treat for all. He insisted upon shaving us first. A spirited dialogue took place between us. At last he told me in a whisper that he would do the thing decently, and begged me not to deprive the sailors of their only fun. I submitted. His basin was a tub, his napkin a piece of sail-cloth, and a hand-brush and wooden sword completed his implements. As soon as I had gone through the operation, I withdrew, knowing what was to follow. My companions were called one after another to the barber's stool. On a signal given, Neptune commanded baptism, and a deluge of water came down on my poor companions. The Sisters,

who were exempted from passing through the ceremony, enjoyed the laughable scene. Next came a sea-fight between the sailors. All the buckets were put in requisition, and were filled and emptied with astonishing dexterity. At length, exhausted with fatigue, all retired. After some time they reappeared in their best clothes, and played all sorts of antics. The whole terminated with an extra supper, and a donation to the sailors. On the 1st of March we had three vessels in sight, and at night we beheld a meteor of a most beautiful appearance. For a considerable time we had opportunities to admire the three nebulæ of Magellan. Two of them are luminous, the third is dark. They seem to be at a distance of thirty degrees from each other; their undefined forms have about five degrees diameter. Their height on the southern horizon varies in proportion as the latitude increases towards the Antartic pole. On the 3d the thunder rolled in all directions, and at night a violent hailstorm burst from the clouds. Nothing remarkable occurred till the 16th, when we came in sight of the Falkland Isles.

Three days after we found ourselves close to the South Shetland Isles. During the night of the 20th two large icebergs floated by us; they appeared about a hundred feet above the surface of the sea. Soon after we saw the volcanic rocks called Greenock, and the rocky islands of San Ildefonso and San Diego. A few days after we were overtaken by a violent tempest which tore our sails, and our ship became the sport of the winds and waves. Scarcely did we begin to breathe when we were subjected to a still greater trial. A strong gale arose and drove us directly towards the land, which soon appeared to our view. The danger was imminent. The ship had become unmanageable. All on deck, in breathless expectation, had their eyes fixed on the frightful rocks that line the Patagonian

coast. We awaited in silence the accomplishment of the designs of Divine Providence. I hastened down to the cabin to warn the Sisters of the danger, and to offer them the help of my ministry. They were engaged in imploring the protection of Heaven through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. You will naturally suppose that on my intimation of the danger, they gave vent to their feelings in lamentations and cries of distress. Quite the reverse. With a smile on their lips, and with that unalterable peace of mind which proceeds from a pure conscience and a heart inflamed with the love of God, they replied that they were not alarmed, and that they abandoned themselves to the will of God. I returned to the deck. The wind suddenly changed and wafted us away from the land. On the 2d of April we steered towards the coast, and on the next day we were near the Peninsula of the Three Mountains. On the following Sunday, 7th of April, being the Feast of Easter, the motion of the ship was so considerable that I ordered the altar to be transported to a private cabin, where, with the assistance of one of the Fathers, I celebrated the holy mysteries. All received the holy communion on that occasion. On the 8th and 9th we coasted along the shores of Chili, and after passing the dangerous rocks of Maca, we entered the port of Valparaiso on the 12th, about five o'clock, P. M.

We remained on board till the following day. The city presented a most picturesque appearance. Built on a range of hills, it presents the form of a semicircular amphitheatre along the coast. The sight was gratifying to us, who had been for more than three months confined to the ship, and had beheld nothing but sky and water, with the exception of a few barren coasts and frightful rocks. Early the next day I repaired to the city to look out for lodgings for our company. I soon returned with the welcome news that sev-

eral Jesuits were assembled in Valparaiso, where they had been convened to make a spiritual retreat, and that a community of French ladies, belonging to the Order of Picpus, invited the ladies of Notre Dame to lodge at their house. Great was the joy with which all hastened to tread the American soil, and still greater the joy with which we were welcomed to our respective lodgings. Nothing could exceed the kindness and attention that were bestowed on us all. The Fathers of the Order of Picpus have also an establishment here; for several years they have had a school, and they render great services to religion.

On Tuesday, the 16th, I set out for Santiago, the capital of Chili, in company with the Reverend Fathers Gomila, Superior of the Missions, and Landan. We had two carriages, and each carriage had two horses, one mounted by the postillion; another conductor, on horseback, aided us in the steepest places. Four spare horses followed or preceded us without rope or bridle, and never strayed from the carriages, though the distance between Valparaiso and Santiago is more than ninety miles. A part of the way resembles that of Mount Simplon, and is much frequented. We passed a large number of wagons with teams of six or eight oxen, several other vehicles, and droves of horses, mules, and asses, all loaded with merchandise. We crossed two ridges of mountains that are linked to the Cordilleras. The two principal passes, remarkable for their height, are called *Cerra-Puerto* and *Questa de Zapato*. We lodged at a little village called *Cura-cavi*. The general aspect of the country between the two cities bears some resemblance to that of the Rocky Mountains, but the soil is extremely barren. On the following day we crossed the second ridge by the pass *da Prado*, and the torrent of the same name, which was forded, for bridges are almost unknown in this country. It seldom

rains in Chili, and when the torrents are swollen by the melting of the snows or the heavy rains, the communication is interrupted for a few days. About noon we arrived at the mansion of Señor Ruiz-Tagle, one of the richest proprietors of the Chilian Republic. He received and treated us with the greatest cordiality. In the evening he took us to the city in his own carriage, which he left at our disposal.

The city of Santiago is situated in a delightful valley, at the foot of the Mapocho Mountains, 33° 35′ southern latitude, and 73° 4′ longitude west from the meridian of Paris, 2410 Spanish feet above the level of the sea. It was founded by Don Pedro de Valdivia, in 1541. Its stately edifices, its public establishments, and its commerce and population, amounting to more than 100,000 souls, and still daily increasing, make it one of the principal cities of South America. It is surrounded by mountains that are called the crown of Santiago. Beyond them are seen the summits of the Andes covered with eternal snows. The streets of the city are large and straight. The vast public square is adorned with a beautiful fountain, representing the statue of Liberty crowning another statue that represents the country. The principal edifices are the governor's palace, the mint, the archiepiscopal palace, the stately cathedral (not yet completed), the church of the Jesuits, and their college, which now belongs to the city. There are, besides these, ten other churches that are sufficiently handsome and capacious. Before the suppression, we had here four houses of the Society. At present there are two convents of Dominicans, two of Augustinians, three of Franciscans, and two of the Order for the Redemption of Captives. There are also eight monasteries of religious ladies. The ladies of Picpus are the only ones that keep a boarding-school, conducted on the same principles as that of Valparaiso. They give a finished edu-

cation to the young ladies belonging to the first families of the country, and they give gratuitous instruction to about three hundred children of the inferior classes. The people seem to be gifted with an excellent character and happy disposition, and are warmly attached to the religion of their forefathers. The government prospers under the shadow of peace, and the wisdom of a well-conducted administration. It extends its solicitude to the *Araucanians*, a savage tribe beyond the river Bobio to the south, and bordering on the country of the Patagonians. Preparations are being made to carry the light of faith to those tribes which have been so long left in darkness, but show the most favorable dispositions to correspond to the zeal of the missionaries whom it will please Divine Providence to send to them.

Valparaiso, by its commerce and population, about 40,000 souls, is the next largest city of Chili. Here, as in Santiago, the buildings are of brick and but one story high, as earthquakes are frequent and violent in this country. The poor, who are very numerous, live in huts made of straw or boughs of trees. The interiors of the houses of the rich vie with the most splendid mansions of the European nobility. You are acquainted with the topography of this republic, which, on account of the beauty of its sky, the temperature of its climate, and the general fertility of its soil, is considered one of the most delightful countries in the world. The spring commences in September, summer in December, winter in June, and autumn in March. From the commencement of spring till the middle of autumn, the heavens are ever serene. The rains begin to fall towards the end of April, and often last till the middle of September. In the province of Coquimbo it rains but twice or thrice a year, and this only for a few hours. In the provinces of Santiago, Aconcaña, and Colcha, rain generally lasts three days, and

is then succeeded by twelve or fifteen days of fine weather. The rains are more copious in proportion as we advance further south towards the Isle of Chiloe. The want of rain in the north is supplied by heavy dews which fall during the dry seasons. The temperature, which varies according to the seasons, is generally favorable to health.

On the 3d of May we left the port of Valparaiso with a favorable wind, and, as I have already mentioned, in eight days we reached the harbor of Lima. The city is seen from the roads, and also the town of Callao, situated on the coast about two leagues from the capital. Father Gomila had offered to accompany us from Valparaiso and to act as interpreter, for he speaks Spanish and French, and with him I repaired to the city to find suitable lodgings for our company, who were to follow us on the succeeding day. The people of the city, which is very extensive, and contains a population of 40,000 souls, were soon apprised of the arrival of Jesuits. They came in crowds to kiss our hands. A respectful old gentleman exclaimed, "O Fathers, how happy I am to see my wishes accomplished! You are the first Jesuits who set foot in my country since the suppression of your order. May God be praised! Still happier would I be were you to remain among us." We went to lodge at the house of a zealous priest named *Mateo Aguilar*. On the following day we paid our respects to the bishop (Lunapizarro), who has been presented to the Roman court as successor to the late archbishop. He received us with great affection, and spoke in terms of praise and esteem of our Society. We also visited the principal churches and establishments of the city, after which we prepared to return to Callao. The omnibus, with five horses, which I had hired to convey us from the port of Lima, was by some accident detained nearly half an hour. The people came from all

quarters to see us, and the carriage was soon surrounded by a numerous crowd. Mothers, and among them ladies of distinction, pressed through the crowd, held up their children, kissed the hands and veils of the Sisters, and conjured them to remain and establish themselves in the city. The men, too, showed us the greatest respect. The same regard and affection were manifested along the road. The people were prompted to act in this manner by the conviction that the education of youth is neglected in their country, and they severely feel the want of it. When the Sisters arrived in Lima, they took up their lodgings at an old Carmelite convent, now converted into an orphan asylum. The crowd poured into the building after them. For four or five days they received visits from morning till night. The most respectable families came with their interpreters, and vied with each other in showing them marks of kindness and affection. They were obliged to accept three carriages, in which, accompanied by the principal ladies of the city, they visited the churches and the other establishments. When they alighted at any place, the people crowded around them, even in the churches, to kiss their hands, their heads, and veils. The humble Sisters received this homage with reluctance, but they were to them a heartfelt consolation; and who knows whether they may not prove instrumental in the designs of Providence to obtain the object of this kind-hearted people? There is not a single religious order in this city that devotes its labors to teach the inferior classes. Hence their want and desire of instruction. I went with my companions to lodge at the former college of the Society, called St. Paul's, where we all occupied the same room. The establishment is very extensive, covering one of the square blocks of the city, and is divided into four square buildings, each having an area in the middle, and supported by a

double colonnade. The roof is flat, as are all the roofs of all the churches and houses in Lima, for here it never rains. At a distance the city with its numerous domes presents a beautiful prospect, but when we enter it all the buildings, apparently without roofs, give it the appearance of a city in ruins. The streets are drawn at right angles and paved with round stones. They are crossed by large sewers that carry the filth to the river Limac, which divides the capital. One of the greatest curiosities of Lima is the fruit-market, by the abundance and variety of tropical productions. There are seventy-two churches within the precincts of the city, including those of religious orders, which are numerous. The cathedral, whose architecture is of the 16th century, is a magnificent pile. It fronts the large public square, on which is also built their archiepiscopal palace. The other sides of the square are adorned with rich stores and colonnades. The main altar of the cathedral is a splendid piece of workmanship. It consists of three rows of columns supporting one another, and plated and ornamented with silver.

Peru! Land of gold and silver, with its fertile and beautiful soil, and its temperate and healthy climate, once the terrestrial paradise of South America, now its poorest and most wretched region: thy commerce languishes; the education of thy children is neglected; the officers of thy venal army fly from standard to standard; the ambition and faithlessness of thy leaders have exhausted thy treasury; thy chiefs, destitute of patriotism, seek their own aggrandizement, and oppress thy people;—such is the state of things in Peru at present, and it is feared the worst is still to come.

To-day (16th May, Feast of Pentecost) we shall leave Callao to continue our voyage. We expect to arrive at Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia, in forty days, and shortly to embrace the Fathers sent from Missouri. I shall write again

to acquaint you with whatever relates to me and my companions. Remember me most affectionately to the Bishop and his clergy, and to all the Fathers, Scholastics, and Brothers of the province as if named, and believe me to be with great respect and esteem,

Very Reverend and Dear Father Provincial,

Your most humble, obedient Son in Jesus Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter II.

To the Members of the Central Councils of Lyons and Paris.

University of St. Louis, June 1, 1849.

Gentlemen:

A transient visit to some tribes of Sioux, on the Upper Missouri, on my way back from the Rocky Mountains, left in me an ardent desire to see those poor Indians again. I was anxious to judge more maturely of their disposition, and ascertain with greater certainty what hopes might be entertained from the establishment of a Mission among them. During the course of last summer, my superiors granted me this truly consoling privilege.

In order to reach their villages, I was obliged to ascend the Missouri as far as Bellevue (a village situated in the territory of the Ottos, 610 miles from St. Louis), and then pursue my journey on horseback, over immense prairies, for about twenty-five days. An excursion through the magnificent plains of the great American desert, and, above all, in the vicinity of this noble river, which descends in innumerable torrents from the Rocky Mountains, offers undoubtedly many charms, and might afford material for descriptions replete with interest; but it would be a theme on which I have had predecessors, and, moreover, it would be giving the letters which I have the honor to address you an extent quite beyond what I dare assume. I will content myself with a sketch by Mr. Nicollet, my own experience enabling me to appreciate the exact fidelity of his picture.

"Consider the boundless extent of a prairie—scan one by one its undulations, and borne as it were from wave to wave, from valley to hill-top, find yourself in presence of the limitless plain which is spread out before you; journey onward—hours, days, and weeks will succeed each other, and emotions of ever-varying delight will captivate the mind, while the spectacle of inexhaustible wealth and new beauties will fascinate the eye. Without doubt there will be moments in which the ardors of a burning sun, and the privation of pure water capable of allaying thirst, will force you to remember that the best of earthly joys have their hidden thorn; but these trials are rare and brief. A gentle breeze almost continually refreshes the atmosphere in these vast plains, and the surface is so uniform as to baffle a surprise from the most crafty enemy. The route is one field of verdure, enamelled with odoriferous wild-flowers, whose brilliant beauty has no witness but the azure firmament. It is particularly during summer that the aspect of the prairies breathe gayety, grace, and life, and if there be any one moment in which they may excite all the sympathies of the traveller, it is when an Indian hunter, in pursuit of the deer or bison, animates this immense solitude with his presence and motions. I pity the man whose heart remains unaffected before so ravishing a spectacle!"

My land-journey commenced at Bellevue, nine miles beyond the Nebraska or Platte River, thence to the mouth of the Niobrarah or *Eau-qui-court*, ten days' march. We met not a single Indian, and no vestige of human habitation greeted the eye. But ever and anon we distinguished small artificial mounds, erected by the hand of man; irregular heaps of stones, and tombs containing the mortal remains of Indians, carefully wrapped in buffalo-robes. At times a solitary post marked the spot where some brave had fallen in

the field of battle—where reposed, perhaps, some ancient Nestor of the desert. These monuments, though with no epitaph to attest lofty deeds or transmit names to posterity, are a tribute of a feeling heart—a mute testimony of the respect the Indian bears to the memory of a father or a friend, and of the value he attaches to the glory of his ancestors. Some herds of bison and dense flocks of deer, of several species, that fled at our approach, alone beguiled the tedium of the march.

It is customary to encamp in places where the grass is fresh, which is generally on the border of a stream or pond of clear water. Care must also be taken for the safety of the horses during the night. To prevent all accident, they are hobbled—*enfargé*, as the Canadian voyageurs say—that is, the two fore-legs are tied together, so as to prevent their straying too far from the camp. Two or three men remain on guard against any surprise from the Indians, too justly renowned as the most expert of horse-thieves. These sentinels also protect us against the bears and wolves which infest the wilderness, and incessantly prowl in the neighborhood of camps. Horses, on perceiving them, take fright and fly, unless the necessary precautions have been taken, and it sometimes happens that the most careful measures prove futile. Thus we, one day, lost a superb stallion of great value. Every evening he was tied to a post, with a long and heavy halter, but in a fright, caused by the approach of wolves, he darted forward with such velocity after the other horses as they rushed by him, that on reaching the end of his halter he broke his neck.

In so long a march, through regions so singularly various, two great inconveniences are sometimes experienced—want of water, and of wood. More than once we had no other fuel than the dry bison-dung, and three times at our camp-

ing-ground water failed us. This is a hard trial for man and horse, especially after travelling all day under the burning sun of the month of August. Another kind of torment, still less supportable when the heat is most intense, is the appearance of fantastical rivers and lakes in the verge of the horizon, seeming to invite the weary traveller to advance and refresh his wasted strength upon their banks. Fatigue and thirst picture in the distance verdure, shade, and coolness awaiting him. The illusion increases the desire of quenching your burning thirst. You hasten onward to reach the goal. Hour succeeds hour; the deceitful mirage heightens in brilliancy, and the panting, exhausted traveller presses on without a suspicion that the phantom flies before him. In an open, elevated region, where the atmosphere is in continual agitation, this effect may be easily produced by the reverberation of the sun's rays from the surface of these vast prairies, throwing the various tints of the verdure upon the deep blue of the firmament.

Besides the difficulties arising from the nature of the ground, there are others which summer always brings with its myriads of insects. Among these, the most to be dreaded is the *gad-fly*, the sting of which will make the gentlest horse bound with rage. Happily for the horse in these plains, Providence has bestowed upon him a defender as skilful as devoted. The starling, unalarmed by the presence of man, which, wheeling ever about the rider, lights on the back of the horse or on his load, to dart with wonderful skill upon the malicious insect which is about to attack his travelling companion.

For ourselves, we were obliged to wage continual war upon the swarms of mosquitoes, and their allies the "gnats." The latter teased us by day, the former, more cowardly, attacked us by night. These famished enemies, the product of the

stagnant waters and decaying plants, at the approach of a convoy, rush from their infected abodes, and accompany it, with their plaintive buzzing, to the spot where the traveller seeks in vain a brief repose after the heat and hardships of the day. The winged tribe at once sound the trump of war, and darting on their tired victim, sting, harass, and pursue him until they have assuaged their sanguinary fury, and obliged the unfortunate traveller, already sweltering with heat, to seek a stifling shelter under a buffalo-robe or a thick blanket. One day I found myself the object of attack of a swarm of winged ants. They came upon me with such furious impetuosity, that in a few seconds I was totally covered. Then I waved my handkerchief about my head, and soon got my horse to leave far behind us this phalanx of black insects, which filled a space of about a quarter of a mile.

To those who pass their days amid the quiet of domestic joys, surrounded by all the delicacies that abundance can produce, a journey through the prairies may appear a sad realization of human misery and suffering; but to the man that elevates his thoughts above earthly and passing things, in order to devote himself to the many unfortunate souls who will love and serve the true God when they know him, such a one can perceive in these privations, in even greater perils and difficulties which may be encountered, only slight annoyances, which he will prefer to all the delights of indolence or the dangers of wealth. He has meditated the sublime words of our Lord: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away;" he recollects that a God become man—"although he was without sin, bore the weight." His sufferings finally teach him, that it is through tribulations and sacrifices that he can enter the kingdom of

heaven, and conduct thereto those who may desire to range themselves and die beneath the banner of the Cross.

I have the honor to be, with the most sincere respect and profound esteem,

Gentlemen,

Your most humble and obed't serv't,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter III.

To the Members of the Central Councils of Lyons and Paris.

University, June 2, 1849.

Gentlemen:

In my last letter I spoke of the annoyance resulting from the continual attacks and buzzing of the mosquitoes and brûlots. I must add to this harsh music the more fearful and more disagreeable noise of the rattlesnake. These reptiles are frequently met in the region styled *Mauvaises-Terres*, a very remarkable plateau, of which I will hereafter give a description—and where the Little Missouri, the Mankizita-Watpa, the Terre-blanche, and the Niobrarah take their rise. Here also are found the many-hued chameleon, the hideous lizard, the horned frog, known by the perhaps more classical name of salamander, and several varieties of small tortoise. I witnessed a singular trait of the instinct of a rattlesnake. The reptile was basking in the sun, surrounded by eight or ten little ones. As soon as she perceived me, she gave the rattle, opened her throat wide, and in an instant the whole brood descended. I withdrew some seconds, and then returned; the young ones had come forth from their living tomb, to which my presence quickly obliged them to seek refuge anew.

The unbroken, arid soil of the *Mauvaises-Terres*, which will ever baffle the most energetic and persevering labor, boasts, however, of several millions of townships, full of life and movement—I mean the villages of the *prairie-dog*—the

site of each one of which extends over an area of several square miles of smooth table-land, on which the grass is very short and thin. The instincts of this remarkable animal (which bears some resemblance to the squirrel) are at once curious and amusing. The grass which springs up in the neighborhood of their dwellings they tear up by the roots; but their vandalism has its exceptions. They seem to respect and spare certain flowers which generally surround their little abodes, and give them a much more agreeable look. These proved to be the *Hedeoma hirta*, the *Solanom triflorum*, the *Lupinus pusillus*, the *Erigeron divaricatum*, *Dysodia chrysanthemoides*, *Ellisia nyctagenea*, and the *Panicum virgatum*.

They pile up the earth around their dwellings about two feet above the surface of the soil, thus protecting themselves against the inundations which, in the rainy seasons or at the melting of the snows, would engulf them and their little hopes. Guided by instinctive foresight, they carefully gather all the straws which are scattered over the plain, and carry them into their subterraneous asylums, to protect them against the rigors of winter. At the approach of a horseman, alarm is rapidly communicated to all the citizens of this singular republic. All quit their habitations, and with head erect, the ears pricked up with anxiety, and a troubled stare, remain standing at the entrance of their abodes, or at the opening of their conical hills. After a momentary silence, they break forth into one loud and repeated chorus of shrill barking. For some minutes life, motion, and restless agitation reign throughout the extensive field they occupy; but at the first gun-shot, all is tranquil, every animal disappearing like a flash. A kind of small owl, and the rattlesnake, appear to entertain amicable relations with the prairie-dog, and are commonly found at the entrance of their

lodges, and in the general fright, the three seek safety in the same asylum. The motives and nature of this singular sympathy are unknown. The wolf and the fox are their greatest enemies.

The Indian word Mankizita-Watpa, commonly translated White Earth River, signifies, more literally, Smoking Land River; and in this region there are incontestable and numerous indications that subterranean and volcanic fires have passed there. The water of the river is strongly impregnated with a whitish slime. We encamped on its shore. A heavy rain had recently washed all the ravines and dry beds of the rivulets and torrents, which are abundant throughout the *Mauvaises-Terres*, consequently the water was very similar to thin mud. What was to be done? We must either use this water to prepare our evening repast, or retire without tea or broth. This is no easy sacrifice in the desert, after riding on horseback for ten or eleven hours in the scorching sun. After many fruitless efforts to purify the water, we were obliged to use it as it was. Hunger and thirst make us less dainty. The mixture of mud, tea, and sugar, was, after all, palatable to our famished stomachs. On the morrow we travelled all day, and found a delicious spring, where we camped all night.

The *Mauvaises-Terres*, in the portions which are traversed by the Mankizita-Watpa, are the most extraordinary of any I have met in my journeys through the wilderness. The action of the rains, snow, and winds upon the argillaceous soil is scarcely credible; and the combined influence of these elements renders it the theatre of most singular scenery. Viewed at a distance, these lands exhibit the appearance of extensive villages and ancient castles, but under forms so extraordinary, and so capricious a style of architecture, that we might consider them as appertaining to some new world, or

ages far remote. Here a majestic Gothic tower, surrounded with turrets, rises in noble grandeur, and there enormous and lofty columns seem reared to support the vault of heaven. Further on you may descry a fort beaten by the tempest, and surrounded by mantellated walls; its hoary parapets appear to have endured, during many successive ages, the assaults of tempest, earthquake, and thunder. Cupolas of colossal proportions, and pyramids which recall the gigantic labors of ancient Egypt, rise around. The atmospherical agents work upon them with such effect, that probably two consecutive years do not pass without reforming or destroying these strange constructions. This clayey soil hardens easily in the sun, is of a grayish hue, or occasionally of a sparkling white; it is easily softened when mixed with water. The Mankizita-Watpa is the great drain of the streams of this country, and corresponds admirably to the name bestowed upon it by the Indians.

The industry of the settler will never succeed in cultivating and planting this fluctuating and sterile soil—no harvest ever crown his efforts. But though it offers no interest to the farmer, and little to the botanist, the geologist and naturalist may find abundant material for study and illustration; for here are found curious remains of the mastodon (the largest of known quadrupeds), mingled with those of the mountain-hare. I have seen well-preserved skulls, horns, &c., so large that two men could hardly raise them. All of these bore the distinct impress of their primitive nature.

I have the honor to be, with profound respect,

Gentlemen,

Your most humble and obed't serv't,

P. J. De Smet.

Letter IV.

To the Directors of the Association.

University of St. Louis, June 4, 1849.

Gentlemen:

It remains for me to give some details concerning the Indian tribes that I was able to visit. In none of my preceding voyages had I met the *Ponkahs;* this time I found the whole of this nation assembled at the mouth of the Niobrarah—their favorite haunt during the fruit season and the gathering of the corn harvest. The manner in which they accosted my travelling companions augured little good, and was near being attended with disastrous consequences. It appears, indeed, that they meditated an attack upon the little troop of white men who, numbering but fifteen, escorted a wagon filled with merchandise for the Fur Company. They intended, at least, to pillage the convoy and kill one of the travellers, under pretext that he came from the country of the Pawnees, where one of their warriors had lost his life. I will present you here the laconic formula of reasoning of one of these barbarians, while in the act of taking aim at his victim. *My brother was killed by a Pawnee; thou art a notorious friend of the Pawnees! I must avenge his death, or recover the debt* (*value of his body*) *in horses or in blankets!* To this degree, unfortunately, has the idea of justice sunk in the Indian mind. Has an Indian fallen by the hand of a white man, every brave of that tribe considers himself justified in retaliating upon the first white man he chances to meet, without regard to his country or the

part of the world from which he may come. I was in advance, but at the first signal of alarm I faced the point of danger. At once the air resounded with reiterated cries of "*The Black-gown has come! The Black-gown has come!*" Surprise and curiosity arrest the work of pillage. The chiefs ask an explanation, and order the spoilers to keep respectfully off, and restore what they had already stolen; then they press around me to shake hands (a ceremony somewhat lengthy, for they were about 600 in number), and conduct us in triumph to our encampment on the shore of the Niobrarah. In my turn I made a little distribution of tobacco, which they appeared to appreciate more than any thing else. The calumet is smoked in token of fraternal good feeling, and passed from mouth to mouth: they lavish upon me as well as upon my companions the most touching marks of kindness and respect. Such was the happy conclusion of a meeting which at first inspired us with such just fears. But the merciful views of Providence extended further.

They besought me to visit their village, four miles from our camp, in order to pass the night with them. I accepted the invitation the more willingly, as it would afford me an opportunity of announcing the truths of Faith. In fact I lost no time, and shortly after my arrival the whole tribe, numbering more than a thousand persons, surrounded the "*Black-gown.*" This was the first time that the Ponkahs had heard Jesus Christ preached by the mouth of his minister. The holy eagerness and attention which they lent to my words induced me to prolong my instructions until late in the night. The next day I baptized their little ones, and when the time of separation arrived, they besought me with the greatest earnestness to renew my visit, and to fix my residence among them. *We will cheerfully listen to the Words of the Great Spirit*, said they, *and submit to all His*

commands that you manifest to us. Until their wishes can be gratified, I considered myself happy to find among them a Catholic half-breed, tolerably well instructed in his religion, who promised me to serve as catechist.

This extraordinary attention on the part of the Indians, and their avidity to hear the Word of God, must appear surprising in a people which seems to unite all intellectual and moral miseries. But the Spirit of the Lord breathes where it will. His graces and his light prompt and aid men whom ignorance, rather than a perverse and disordered will, renders vicious. Moreover, that same Spirit which obliged the most rebellious to cry with St. Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" can also soften the most obdurate hearts, warm the coldest, and produce peace, justice, and joy, where before reigned iniquity, trouble, and disorder. The great respect, and the marked attention which the poor Indians testify on all occasions to the missionary who appears among them to announce the Gospel, are a source of much consolation and encouragement to him. He discovers the finger of God in the spontaneous manifestations of good-will offered by these poor creatures.

The language of the Ponkahs differs little from that of the Ottos, the Kanzas, and the Osages. Of intrepid and tried courage, they have, notwithstanding the paucity of their numbers, made themselves feared by their more numerous neighbors. They may with justice be styled the *Flat-Heads* of the Plains, on account of their bravery. Although attached by taste to the wandering life, they have begun to cultivate some fields of corn, of pumpkins, and potatoes.

Here, then, is a portion of the vineyard as yet untilled, but which only waits for a generous, charitable hand to cause it to yield fruits worthy of the dews of heaven. Can the Lord refuse his grace and his assistance to the apostolic

man, who abandons all the advantages of civilized life in order to teach, in the midst of every species of privation, the salutary and consoling words of the Gospel? When I reflect upon the hopes that may be justly entertained of the Indian tribes of the North and West of the United States, I cannot refrain from blessing the bounty and mercy of God, and trembling at the consideration of the terrible judgments of his justice. While Europe, shaken to the centre by the incessant efforts of learned impiety, appears to have strength or vigor only to shake off the divine yoke which the blood of Jesus Christ has rendered "sweet and easy," the forlorn inhabitant of the far-distant wilderness lifts his suppliant hands to heaven, and in all the sincerity of his heart asks to know the true Faith, and to be directed in the path of true happiness. While in the heart of Catholicity the priests of the Most High sink under oppression, Providence, impenetrable in its views, is secretly preparing for them the vast solitudes of another hemisphere. There, perhaps, the Divine Master will fix his sanctuary, and choose to himself new worshippers whose simple hearts will offer him only an oblation of gratitude and love.

With the greatest respect, and commending myself to your kind prayers,

I am, Gentlemen,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

P. J. De Smet S. J

Letter V.

To the Directors of the Association.

St. Louis, June 5, 1849.

Gentlemen:

It is time to pass to the Sioux, whose territory I reached a few days after my visit to the Ponkahs. Mr. Campbell, one of the best interpreters in the country, generously offered to accompany me to the different tribes of this nation. His acquaintance with the country and the manners of the Indians, as well as the respect and friendship which the latter entertain for him, greatly facilitated my relations with them. I must also add, as a tribute of well-merited gratitude, that the officers of Fort Bonis and of Fort Pierre received me with the most delicate hospitality, and that the concurrence of their influence aided powerfully to render my intercourse with the savages easier and more profitable.

I have several times observed, in former letters, that the Indians inhabiting the valley of the Upper Missouri, are generally more cruel than those sojourning west of the Rocky Mountains. Probably this arises from their almost incessant wars, which inflame them with a love of plunder and a thirst for vengeance. At the epoch of my visit to the Sioux, a troop of these barbarians were returning from a war against the Mahas, with thirty-two human scalps torn from defenceless old men, and from women and children whose husbands and fathers were off hunting. When they re-enter their villages, after the combat, it is their custom to attach these horrible trophies of their shameful victory to the point

of their lances or to the bits of their horses. At the sight of these spoils the whole tribe shouts with joy, and every one considers it the highest gratification to assist at the *Scalp Dance and Feast*—which is celebrated amid the most discordant yells and fearful gestures. They plant a post daubed with vermillion in the midst of the camp; the warriors surround it, flourishing in their hands the bloody scalps which they have brought back from the field of battle; each one howls his war-song to the lugubrious tone of a large drum; then giving in turn his stroke of the tomahawk on the post, he proclaims the victims that his hatchet has immolated, and exhibits ostentatiously the scars of the wounds which he has received.

Such is, even at the present day, the degraded condition of the unfortunate Indian. They never take the field without endeavoring to draw down the favor of the Great Spirit, either by diabolical rites or by rigorous fasts, macerations, and other corporeal austerities. They even go so far as to cut off joints of the fingers and toes. Add to the thick shade of heathen darkness a shocking depravation of manners, and you will have a faint idea of the lamentable position of these wretched tribes. Yet these same men welcomed me with open arms, as a messenger from the Great Spirit! A vivid emotion, depicted in every countenance, accompanied their respectful attention to my discourse, while I instructed them in the great truths of religion.

An event which occurred two days after my arrival at Fort Pierre, contributed much to augment their confidence in me. I give it as it occurred. The tribe of the Ogallallahs had entered in a hostile manner on the lands of their neighbors, the Absharokes (or Crows), and had attacked them The latter defended themselves bravely, routed their aggressors, and killed ten or twelve warriors. They had even em

ployed a mode of repulsion which covered the tribe that experienced its effects with immortal disgrace: they pursued the Ogallallas with rods and clubs. This, according to them, signifies *that their adversaries were worth neither the lead nor powder that would be expended in killing them.* So shameful a defeat discourages the Indian, and he no longer dares appear before such an enemy.

In this affair, the chief of the vanquished nation, named the Red Fish, lost his daughter, who was carried off by the Crows into captivity. Melancholy and humbled, he deserted the wigwams of his tribe, which loss of honor and the death of so many of its warriors had overwhelmed with mourning and desolation. He presented himself at Fort Pierre on the morrow of my arrival. The object of his journey was to obtain the liberty of his daughter, through the mediation of the officers of the fort; he offered eighty fine buffalo-robes and his best horses for her ransom. In his visit to me, grasping my hand firmly in his, with tears coursing down his cheeks, and heart-broken with grief, he thus addressed me, while sobs often interrupted his utterance: "*Black-gown, I am a most unhappy father! I have lost my beloved daughter. Pity me, for I have learned that the medicine of the Black-gown* (the prayer) *is powerful before the Great Spirit. Speak to the Master of Life in my favor, and I will still preserve hope of seeing my child.*"

At these few words, which the emotion of the aged man rendered singularly eloquent, I replied, that I sympathized with his sorrow, but that he must himself prepare the way for the blessing of Heaven—and that by virtuous deeds he might obtain from the Great Spirit the accomplishment of his desires. I added, that without doubt the Master of Life had been offended by this unjust attack upon the Crows, of which he himself had been the chief instigator, in his posi-

tion as Great Chief, and that to himself solely he must attribute the misfortune of his child, and all the other miseries which had resulted from that expedition. I exhorted him to abandon in future all unprovoked attacks upon his neighbors, and to persuade his tribe to hearken to the orders of the Great Spirit, which I had come to announce to them. I concluded by speaking to him of the mercy of God, who always hears the voice of the afflicted when they love and serve him. I also promised him the assistance of my prayers, and he on his part agreed to follow my counsels.

Red Fish returned soon after to his nation, and collected all the principal chiefs, in order to communicate to them what had passed at the fort, and in particular his conversation with me, the *Black-gown*, concerning his daughter. At that very moment a cry of joy was heard in the extremity of the camp. They ran up from all sides to ask the cause; at length the good tidings are announced, *that the captive daughter has escaped safe and sound from her enemies.* The old chieftain scarcely dares to believe what he hears. He rises, and on leaving his cabin he has the unspeakable consolation of beholding once more his beloved child, whom Providence had restored. Imagine, if possible, his astonishment and delight, shared with him by his tribe. Every hand was lifted to heaven to thank the Great Spirit for the deliverance of the prisoner. The report flew quickly from village to village, and this coincidence, that Divine Providence permitted for the good of the Ogallallahs, was to them a certain proof of the great power of Christian prayer, and will, I hope, contribute to confirm these poor Indians in their good dispositions.

The number of half-breeds and Indians baptized among the Sioux amounts to several hundred. I conferred the same sacrament upon six adults far advanced in years, two of

whom were over ninety, and dwelt in a little hut of buffalo-skins, in which a poor fire with difficulty imparted a little warmth to their members, chilled and stiffened with age. They received me with great joy. I spoke to them of the Great Spirit, of the necessity of baptism, of the future life, of the blessed or miserable eternity which must follow this state of being. They listened with avidity to the instructions which I repeated during several days, and, in fine, received the sacrament of regeneration. They were never weary of telling me again and again that they had never ceased to love the Great Spirit, and that, being ignorant of more suitable prayers, they had daily offered him the first fruits of the calumet!

This recalls to my mind a fact, insignificant in itself, which nevertheless proved a source of genuine consolation to me. On my arrival in the nation of the Brules, I was singularly surprised to find myself followed by a youth about fifteen years of age, whom my presence seemed to afford a degree of pleasure which it would be difficult for me to describe. The little kind encouragement, by which I corresponded to his manifestation of contentment, so effectually conciliated his affection for me, that the efforts and threats even of the savages who surrounded me, could not remove him any length of time from my person. Scarcely had they taken him from my side by violence, than another path brought him back; he even penetrated into the grand council of the chiefs, in which the expeditious diplomacy of the Brules agitated the questions of which my arrival among them required a solution. Night came on, and terminating the deliberations of the assembly, obliged me to withdraw from my new friend. His narrow and flattened brow, his silly stare and extraordinary gestures, gave me to understand that he was of the number of those beings whose want of reason is a safeguard

against the loss of innocence, and I resolved to regenerate him on the morrow in the salutary waters of baptism. I therefore caused the whole tribe to be collected, and after giving them a clear explanation of the blessings of the sacrament that I was going to confer, I caused them to understand the happiness that was in reserve for all eternity to a being apparently so vile, and who had hitherto been only an object of their contempt, or at least of their compassion. These few words produced a profound impression upon my new auditory, and were followed by numerous petitions for the grace belonging to the Great Spirit, like my poor friend Paschal (this was the name of the little idiot), who is now treated with respect almost amounting to veneration throughout his whole tribe. But not being able to remain with them longer than a few days, I contented myself with baptizing a great number of their children; and giving the others a hope, that later we would return and visit them, and that we could then instruct them, and grant, in a more useful manner, the favor which they solicited.

There is a custom existing among the Indians, which is excessively fatiguing to the stranger or to the missionary who visits one of their villages. As soon as he arrives, a succession of grand banquets is given in his honor, and Indian politeness exacts that he accept all these invitations—and the savage prepares without delay the best and most delicate that he has. The fat dog, which with them replaces the fatted calf, is the most acceptable dish, and is reserved for great occasions. After this, succeed buffalo-tongues, ribs, etc., etc., and a great variety of fruits, grain, and roots.

In every camp which I visited, I was conducted ceremoniously from banquet to banquet, by the leading chiefs. Everywhere I was presented with a dish so filled with their delicacies that each portion would have sufficed me during several

days. All must be consumed. This would be impossible were it not for the allowance of the blessed privilege of conducting one or two *eaters* with us. In some of the Sioux camps, the guests are permitted just to touch the dish, and then take it home to their cabins.

In the various camps which I visited, I presented each one of the great chiefs with a medal of our Holy Father, Pope Pius IX. On this occasion I explained to them the high position of the Great Chief of all the *Black-gowns*—the respect, the veneration, and the love that all the nations faithful to the Great Spirit testify to his vicar on earth, etc., etc. They immediately brought the calumet, and after having offered it first to the Master of Life, imploring his blessing, the savages, in their engaging simplicity, presented it to his visible representative, entreating me to make known to him the esteem and love which they bear to him, and the ardent desire they entertain to listen to the *Black-gowns* sent in his name.

When distributing medals to the Indians, these explanations become necessary; for, being naturally inclined to superstition, they often treat those objects with more than respect. A Sioux chief gave me a singular proof of this. While I was suspending the medal of Pius IX. to his neck, he testified an extraordinary joy and gratitude. "*I will place it*," said he, "*with my War-Manitou; it will render me as prudent in councils during peace, as the other has rendered me strong in battle.*" I asked an explanation of these words. He at once opened a little box, and drew forth from it a package, carefully wrapped up in buckskin. He unrolled it, and, to my great surprise, I saw a colored picture of General Diebitsch, in full uniform, and mounted on a beautiful war-horse. For years the Russian had been the Manitou of war to the Sioux chief; he invoked him, and offered him his

calumet, before all his enterprises against his enemies, and attributed to him the success of the many victories he had gained. I endeavored to disabuse the poor Indian of his strange devotion, and have reason to hope that my efforts were not useless.

As stated already, I was sent to the Sioux tribes to sound their dispositions in a moral and religious point of view. The little account that I have the honor of presenting you discloses the result of my visit. What I have narrated touching these inhabitants of the desert, offers little encouragement to the missionary. There is an immense difference between them and the Flat-Heads, and numerous other nations that occupy the regions west of the Rocky Mountains. These first children of my apostolate have given me consolations that I should vainly seek among the Sioux. Would, then, a mission with the latter prove destitute of success? The little experience that I have been able to acquire, and my residence among them, inspire me to trust more confidently in Him who holds in his hands the most obdurate hearts and the most refractory wills. I hope that in the course of this year something may be done in favor of these degraded Indians, so long left without the aid of religion. The same happiness will be granted to the Black-Feet, who already count eleven hundred neophytes. The pious Associates of the Propagation of the Faith may contribute greatly to the accomplishment of this holy work, by their fervent prayers.

I quitted the uplands of the Niobrarah and the Mankizita towards the end of October, 1848, before the season of rain and snow. These places are the temporary abodes to which the different tribes of Sioux repair in autumn, for the purpose of hunting the wild animals, which abound at that time, and thus provide themselves with hides and meat for the approaching winter. The consumption of skins in Mis-

souri must be immense, for all Indians use them for constructing their huts, as well as for the harness of their horses and their own clothing. Last year, 110,000 buffalo-robes, with skins of elk, gazelle, deer, big-horn, otter, beaver, etc., and 25,000 salted tongues, were received in the warehouses of St. Louis. This may give you an idea of the extraordinary number of buffaloes killed, and of the extent of the vast wilderness which furnishes pasturage to these animals.

We set off in a skiff from Fort Bonis, which is near the mouth of the *Little Medicine River*. Our trip was delightful. The weather proved magnificent, and the two shores of the Missouri, teeming at this season with an extraordinary quantity of every species of game, offered the most graceful and varying spectacle, while it opened a vast field to the greediness and skill of our hunters.

At Council Bluffs, the sky, which had been hitherto clear and serene, suddenly changed, to give place to wind and tempest, and thick clouds of snow, which accompanied us during two days. We took refuge in a dense forest, in order to defend ourselves from the inclemency of the storm. The wild honey which we found there was our principal resource, one poplar alone, which we felled, furnishing us with more than we needed.

We made but little progress during ten days, on account of head winds, rain, and snow. Before arriving at the mouth of the Grand Tarkio, the Missouri was so covered with floating ice that, in our frail bark, we were exposed to the greatest danger, especially from the many sawyers with which the bed of the river is thickly set, and which discover or conceal their menacing heads on every side. These are trees, or trunks of trees, which the river uproots and washes from its banks, and whose roots get firmly fastened in the muddy

bed of the river. As there are no dikes or embankments which can hinder the river from overflowing, it often happens that whole forests are uprooted and swallowed in its waves. These create great embarrassment and obstacles to its navigation.

Prudence forced us to abandon our boat. I therefore hired a farmer's wagon, which brought us safe and sound to St. Joseph, after a drive of two days through a great forest which skirts the Missouri. The steamer which I hoped to meet there had departed on the eve of my arrival, and thus the opportunity of a prompt return to St. Louis appeared lost to me. I resolved, however, to exert myself to the utmost to overtake the boat: this to many would appear folly; the idea of running after a high-pressure steamboat certainly does appear quite ridiculous. But I relied upon the numerous delays of the boat at the different sand-banks, which were more likely to take place, also, as the season was advancing. I calculated well; in twenty-four hours I was on board.

For four months I had been night and day exposed to the open air, and, as in all my other excursions, with no bed but a buffalo-robe. Yet my health had been uninterruptedly good, not even suffering from the slightest attack of cold; but scarcely was I subjected, during *one day*, to the heat of the stove in the cabin of the steamboat, than I was seized with a violent sore throat—it being my first indisposition through the whole of my long journey.

At length, after four months' absence, I arrived without other accident at the University of St. Louis, where, enjoying with my brethren the charms of the community life, I soon forgot the little fatigues of my expedition.

P. S.—I subjoin a list of the principal forest trees found

along the banks of the Missouri, hoping it may prove agreeable to the amateurs of botany:

Populus angulata.
Platanus occidentalis.
Celtis crassifolia.
Gleditschia triacanthus.
Robinia pseudacacia.
Juglans olivæ formis.
Cornus Florida.
Azalia spinosa.
Gymnocladus Canadensis.
Morus, rubra et alba.
Laurus sassafras.
Ulmus Americana and aspera.
Acer rubrum et saccharinum.
Diospyros Virginiana.
Salix.
Cornus sericea.
Prunus.
Pyrus coronarea.
Castanea Americana et pumila.
Quercus palustris, macrocarpa et pumila.
Betula nigra, papyracea et lenta.
Sambucus.
Juglans squamosa et nigra.
Corylus.
Fraxinus.
Pinus.
Juniperus Virginiana.
Vaccinium resinosum.
Magnolia.

SHRUBS.

Berberis vulgaris.
Viburnum (Arrow-wood.)
Hawthorn.
Vaccinium; Oxycoccus.
Laurus benzoin. (Spice-bush.)
Burnet saxifrage.
Vines of different species.
Elkwood.

I am, with the most profound respect, and esteem the most sincere,

Gentlemen,

Your most humble and most obed't serv't,

P J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter VI.

To the Directors of the Association.

University of St. Louis, June 10, 1849.

Gentlemen:

In order to complete the observations which I had the honor of offering you in my late letters on the Western tribes of Indians of the United States, I purpose submitting to you certain facts touching the actual condition of the Indians in Upper Missouri and among the Rocky Mountains.

The facts—such is, at least, my opinion—reveal clearly the melancholy future which at no very remote epoch awaits these nations, if efficient means are not employed for preventing the woes with which they are threatened. My visit to several tribes, and, above all, that which I lately paid to the great Sioux nation, have only confirmed the sad forebodings to which my experience, during a prolonged residence among these forsaken children of the forest, had given birth. I have communicated these views, in substance, to an honorable agent of the United States Government, who is laboring with ardor and constancy in the amelioration of the condition of the Indians, and who joins, as much as is in his power, the use of means to the laudable wishes of his heart.

I have traversed at several different times the vast plains which are watered by the Missouri and its principal tributaries, such as the Platte or Nebraska, Yellow Stone, the Mankizita-Watpa, the Niobrarah, Tchan Sausan, called James River by the whites, the Wassecha or Vermillion, and

the three great superior forks that constitute the source of the Missouri, viz., the Jefferson, the Gallatin, and the Madison. Coasting along the north and south branches of the Saskatchawan, I penetrated three hundred miles into the interior of the forests and plains watered by the Athabasca. In every place the whites, half-breeds, and natives, who inhabit these regions, agree in saying that the buffalo, moose, or American elk, and deer of all kinds, diminish in an alarming manner, and that in a few years these races of animals will have wholly disappeared. The territory traversed by the Athabasca furnished, some years ago, abundant game to the greater part of the nations of the Crees, and to a tribe of Assiniboins, which, sixty years previous, had detached themselves from the main body of their nation. Well, over this vast extent of territory I met but *three families*, viz.—an old Iroquois with his children and grandchildren, numbering about thirty-seven; a family of half-breeds composed of seven persons; and a Sioux with his wife and children. The Crees and the Assiniboins, hitherto the occupants of this land, have been forced to follow the track of the buffalo, and are beginning to intrude upon the territory of the Black-Feet. I resided a long time among the Flat-Heads and the Kalispels. I have visited at different epochs the Koetenays at the North, and the Shoshonies or Snakes at the South. Their vast territories, watered by the principal branches of the Upper Columbia and the Rio Colorado of the West, were formerly abundantly provided with every variety of game, which furnished them with clothing and nourishment.

But now that the buffalo has disappeared from these lands, the poor Indians are obliged to go and pass a portion of the year east of the Rocky Mountains, in search of their only means of subsistence. Often, too, in pursuit of their prey, they are drawn into the regions claimed by the Crows

and Black-Feet, and are thus obliged to open their way, arms in hand. The Yantons and the Santies, Sioux tribes, are beginning to make inroads on the hunting-grounds of the Brules, a portion of the Sioux nation. The Ponkahs are often driven to the necessity of hunting in the lands of the Sioux and of the Cheyennes. Formerly the Iowas, the Omahas, and the Ottos subsisted principally on the product of their buffalo-hunts; at present they are reduced to the most pitiful condition, having nothing for food but a small quantity of deer, birds, and roots. Such is their misery that they are forced to scour the country in every direction, and in little bands, most happy if they escape the ambush of an enemy more powerful than themselves, and who frequently massacre the old, the women, and children. It is not rare here to have to deplore similar cruelties. Each year shows an increase of these revolting scenes—melancholy forerunners of an approaching and tragical issue.

The Pawnees and the Omahas are in a state of nearly absolute destitution. Surrounded by enemies, where shall they go to hunt the wild animals which often fail them, having retired to other sections? It is true, that for a considerable time it has been customary among them to cultivate a little field of squashes and corn; but often, also, when the harvest appears to meet their expectation and their toil, the enemy comes suddenly and wrests from them this last pitiful resource.

The buffalo is disappearing and diminishing each successive year on the prairies of the Upper Missouri. This does not, however, hinder them from being seen grazing in very numerous herds in particular localities; but the area of land that these animals frequent is becoming more and more circumscribed. Besides, they do not remain in the same place, but change pasturage, according to the seasons.

Thence arise the incursions which the Sioux make into the territories of the Riccaries, the Mandans, the Minataries, the Crows, and the Assiniboins; thence also the mutual invasions of the Crows and the Black-Feet in their respective hunts. These depredations are committed by all the wandering tribes of the desert, and give birth to dissensions, and to incessant and bloody wars, which annually revive and multiply, to their great detriment and misfortune. It is not, therefore, astonishing that the number of these savages is gradually decreasing. In the plains, war and famine lend their aid; on the frontier of civilization, liquors, vices, and maladies carry them off by thousands.

I have visited the Black-Feet, the Crows, Mandans, Assiniboins, the Riccaries, the Minataries, etc., who possess the whole region of the Upper Missouri and its tributaries. The condition of all these savages, far from the influence of all religious and moral principles, renders them much alike—*ejusdem farinæ*. Among them all are met the same cruelty, the same barbarity, the same sloth and supineness, in fine, the same degrading and revolting superstitions, pushed to the most remote limits which the human mind abandoned to itself, and under the empire of vile passions, can reach.

It is quite a common observation, and I have myself heard it offered by several persons, that the "religious as well as the social condition of the Indians of these regions, is in nowise capable of amelioration." I am far from participating in this opinion. Let the obstacles arising from the people who style themselves civilized, be removed; let all trade in ardent spirits, that deadly scourge of the Indian, be prevented; let missionaries be sent, whose zeal is prompted only by the love of our Divine Master, and with no object but the happiness of the poor souls intrusted to their care, and I am confident that in a short time we should have the

consoling spectacle of a sensible improvement among them. My personal observations serve as a foundation for these hopes. I have had frequent interviews with the Black-Feet, the Crows, the Assiniboins, the Riccaries, and the Sioux. They have always lent the most marked attention to all my words; they have ever listened to the holy truths which I preached to them with extreme pleasure and a lively interest. They entreated me with the most captivating ingenuousness to take compassion on their miseries, to establish myself among them, promising to join a faithful practice to the knowledge of the truths I should impart to them. Among the Indians of the great American desert, I never found even one who presumed to rail against our holy religion.

To put an end to the cruel wars which decimate these nations; to rescue so many souls from the baneful consequences of the idolatry in which they are buried; to prevent the total destruction of these tribes already so wretched, and yet redeemed like ourselves by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is it not an enterprise worthy of inflaming the zeal of a minister of the Gospel? a work worthy of claiming the efficient co-operation and assistance of a government as powerful as is that of the United States?

As to agriculture, considered as a means of civilization, its introduction will always be difficult among the Indians, as long as there remains to them a hope of procuring buffaloes or other wild animals. It would prove, in my opinion, a chimera to pretend to introduce this branch among them on an extensive scale in the beginning. We know, however, by experience, that, although little habituated to the fatigue of the assiduous labor that farming requires, some tribes have already attempted to cultivate their little fields. This step taken, each year, according to the abundance of the increase, the limits of these little fields might be extended. Like

their brethren who reside west of the Rocky Mountains, they would become more and more attached to the soil whose productions would be the result of their toil. Their roving habits, the wars which often spring from them, would insensibly give place to a more peaceable and domestic life. The animals which they would raise replacing the buffalo, would insensibly efface its memory amid surrounding plenty.

During the last ten years, a great part of the disposable funds of the Vice-province of Missouri have been employed in the relief of the Indians. The liberality of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith established at Lyons, and those of our friends, have assisted us powerfully in converting and civilizing the tribes beyond the Rocky Mountains. Several of our fellow-members still pursue there the same work of charity, and many of our Fathers and Brothers desire to visit the tribes which I visited last year. An establishment founded among them east of the Rocky Mountains would be most desirable; but the pecuniary means which they have at their disposal are very far from answering to the work which they contemplate. The lively interest which you take, gentlemen, in the salvation and civilization of so many thousands of men in the wilderness, inspires me with confidence to appeal to your generosity, which alone can furnish the means of conducting to a happy conclusion an enterprise so vast and so eminently Catholic.

There are among these Indians several hundreds of children of mixed blood, whose parents are anxious that means of instruction should be afforded them. To attain this, schools and establishments would be necessary, in which agriculture could be learned; and also many children of pure Indian blood could be received, as the heads of families are desirous of confiding them to the care of the missionaries. A short statistic will give you an idea of the good

which might be done among these Indians. Among the Black-Feet, Father Point and myself baptized more than 1100 children; among the "Gens du Sang," a tribe of Black-Feet, M. Thibaut baptized sixty; the Rev. M. Bellecourt, of Red River, visited Fort Berthold, on the Missouri, and baptized a good number of the children of the Mandans; all the savages presented him their children for baptism. F. Hœcken, in an excursion made among several tribes on the Missouri, baptized over 400 persons; M. Ravoux, who visited some tribes of Sioux in 1847, and penetrated as far as Fort Pierre, was listened to everywhere with a consoling eagerness, and baptized a great many children. In my late tour among the Sioux, the Ponkahs, etc., I baptized more than 300 children and several adults.

From all these facts, may we not conclude, with sufficient certainty, that these poor souls seem ripe for a more peaceable life, and for a blessed eternity?

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Yours, &c.,

P. J. De Smet.

Second Series.

Letter I.

To the Chevalier Dieudonné Stas, Editor of the Journal de Bruxelles.

Brussels, June 30, 1853.

Dear Sir:

After many journeys in the deserts of North America, I am at last in my native land, happy to be able to express to the benefactors of the poor Indian all the gratitude of the missionaries.

Since my last departure from Belgium, I have travelled prairies where no mission had ever been established—indeed, where no European probably had ever been.

We ascended the Missouri for about seven hundred and thirty leagues, and crossed a plateau of over a hundred, on the upland that separates the waters of the Yellowstone from those of the Missouri. From the Yellowstone we proceeded southwest, marching about three hundred leagues to the Black Hills and Wolf Mountains, spurs of the Rocky Mountains. We left these hills at the great road leading from the Rocky Mountains to California.

On the 2d of September, 1851, we were on this highway, trodden by the whites hastening, these latter years, to the gold mines. The road is fine, broad, and perhaps the longest in the world. On the track of the emigrant caravans, you

can travel easily from the frontier settlements to the Pacific. This immense avenue is like a barn-floor swept by the winds. No blade of grass springs up, so unceasingly is it trodden by the feet of thousands of Americans and Europeans hastening to California. Our Indians, who had seen only pathless wastes, crossed at most by a hunter's trail, thought, on beholding it, that the whole nation of the whites had passed over it, and that the land of the sunrise must be depopulated. They could hardly believe me when I told them that the multitudes who had gone were scarcely missed.

Providence has supported my feeble courage, guided my steps, fructified the seed of the gospel in lands which had not yet received them. After travelling many hundred leagues, I saw what good could be done among these wandering tribes, always at war, without consolation in misery, because they scarcely know of the hopes of eternity. With the grace of God, I hope to return next spring with Bishop Miège, the Vicar-Apostolic. We will be able to found missions for those nomade tribes on a soil fertile enough to support them, and thus removing occasion of war, let civilization, with the light of the faith, dawn on these wastes.

The limits of a journal do not permit me to enter into details on this expedition to the Great Desert, on which I have yet published but one letter; but I intend to publish more in the *Précis Historiques*, published by Rev. E. Terwecoren, at the College of the Society of Jesus, Brussels. Besides a notice on the Mormons, a new sect, dating from 1826, but threatening to play in America the part of the Moslem in Asia, I am preparing notes to develop to Europeans the almost unknown state of religion in that vast portion of the world, and to leave authentic documents on the rising church of the wilderness. I will vary these historical details with notes, written in the desert, on geology,

zoology, botany, the manners, religion, and language of the Indians.

This will show what civilized Europeans are too apt to forget, that Catholicity, by the very force of her missions, contributes to the civilization of nations and the development of science. The government of the United States knows it, and encourages our labors. The good to be accomplished is in every respect immense. The Catholics and recent converts need priests to preserve the faith, the pagans to learn the good tidings of the gospel. The small number of ministers of the Lord there does not suffice for the four millions of Catholics, and for all the Indians who desire ardently the visit of a Black-gown, to instruct and baptize them. I have come to Europe to appeal to generous hearts.

I will express one more desire, and express it frankly. I come, too, to solicit alms. I am not unaware that Belgium is constantly visited by missionaries from America, the Indies, and the East. I am conscious that the benevolent can scarcely satisfy these repeated solicitations. But Europeans cannot conceive the immense want of succors experienced in these countries, to prevent defections, convert the heathen, form missionaries, establish schools, build churches, &c.

Consent, sir, to contribute by your estimable paper, which has elicited so many generous works, to make known this twofold object of my coming to Europe, where I shall probably remain till the close of September.

Your obed't serv't,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter II.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Journey to the Great Desert in 1851.

University of St. Louis, Jan. 16, 1852.

M******:

On the 7th of last June, accompanied by Father Christian Hœcken, I embarked, at this place, on board the steamer St. Ange, to go to the Rocky Mountains. The boat ran to Fort Union, which is about three miles above the mouth of the River Yellow Stone, on the northern side, and about 730 leagues northwest of St. Louis. Several passengers, members of the American Fur Company, set out on the same occasion, intending to repair to the different trading-posts established among the Indians of the Upper Missouri. They took with them about eighty men; these were principally Canadians, some were Americans, some Irish, German, Swiss, and Italians, and several "*Français de France*," a title which is given them here, to distinguish them from the Franco-Americans. They went in quest of earthly wealth; Father Hœcken and I in search of heavenly treasures—to the conquest of souls.

We had had a wet spring. Up to the moment of our departure the rain had been excessive; the snows and ice, which had collected in heaps during the rigorous season of the more northern regions, detaching themselves and dissolving, in a very short time swelled the thousand and thousand tributaries of the mighty Mississippi. These rivers, one

after the other, precipitated their torrents into the "*Father of Waters*," and so swelled it that it overflowed, rolling its muddy billows from upland to upland, over a surface of eight, fifteen, and in several places of twenty miles in width. No longer knowing any bounds, the river, usually so grave and sublime, disappeared. Beneath its waters also vanished the verdure of the smiling plains, the stately forests, and the varied spring-flowers which so delight the eye of the traveller. A vast lake now covered all this space; and the immense volume of water, which went on continually enlarging, carried ruin and desolation among the numerous habitations which covered the lowlands on either shore. We could see the torrent descending with the violence and rapidity of an avalanche, overturning and sweeping every thing with its angry waves.

In ordinary times, the sawyers and sand-banks are the principal obstacles to navigation in the western waters; they had now entirely disappeared, and gave the pilot no anxiety. But other dangers had taken their place; the whole face of the waters seemed covered with wrecks; houses, barns, stables, fences of fields and gardens, were borne away, in confusion, with thousands of uprooted trees—wood piled on the shore and lumber-yards, were all afloat. In the midst of these floating masses, whose dangerous contact we could not always avoid, the St. Ange used her whole power of steam to stem an almost irresistible current. Several times the boat was carried down; twice, especially, it was a regular contest between the river and the steamer. The latter, for a good quarter of an hour, lay, as if motionless, in the midst of the angry waters, but, thanks to the quantity of tar and resin with which her furnaces were charged, she at last triumphed.

Amid such fearful dangers, the remembrance of the object

of the missionary's voyage sustains and animates him; he knows that he is in the hands of Him who can "command the winds and the sea," and that rarely has heaven permitted that a vessel bearing missionaries should perish.

The inundations of the rivers, the continual rains of spring, and the sudden transitions from heat to cold, are, in this climate, sure precursors of malignant fevers. The cholera appears to assume an epidemic type in these regions. Disease, in many forms, soon appeared on board the St. Ange. From the moment of its advent a mournful silence took the place of the rude shouts and boisterous conversations of our travellers. Six days had hardly elapsed from our departure, when the boat resembled a floating hospital. We were 500 miles from St. Louis when the cholera broke out in the steamer. On the tenth, a clerk of the American Fur Company, vigorous, and in the prime of manhood, was suddenly seized with all the symptoms of cholera, and expired after a few hours' illness. The following days several others were attacked with the same malady, and in a short time thirteen fell victims to the epidemic.

A bilious attack confined me to my bed nearly ten days. Good Father Hœcken devoted himself to the sick night and day, with a zeal at once heroic and indefatigable. He visited them; he assisted them in their sufferings; he prepared and administered remedies; he rubbed the cholera patients with camphor; he heard the confessions of the dying, and lavished upon them the consolations of religion. He then went and blessed their graves on the bank of the river, and buried them with the prayers and ceremonies prescribed by the Roman ritual. This beloved brother had, naturally, a hardy constitution, and was habituated to a life of privation; but the journeys and continued labors of the mission among the Indians had greatly weakened it, and his assiduous and

fatiguing attentions to the sick completely exhausted him. In vain I warned him, begging him to spare himself; his zeal silenced every other consideration; instead of taking precautions against exposure, he seemed to delight in it. It gave me pain to see him fulfilling this heroic work of charity alone; but I was in such a state of debility that I was incapable of offering him the least help. On the 18th, fears were entertained that my illness was assuming the form of cholera. I requested Father Hœcken to hear my confession and give me extreme unction, but at the very moment he was called to another sick person, who was in extremity. He replied, going, "I see no immediate danger for you; tomorrow we will see." He had assisted three dying ones that day. Alas! never shall I forget the scene that occurred some hours later. Father Hœcken's cabin was next to mine. Between one and two o'clock at night, when all on board were calm and silent, and the sick in their wakefulness heard naught but the sighs and moans of their fellow-sufferers, the voice of Father Hœcken was suddenly heard. He was calling me to his assistance. Awaking from a deep sleep, I recognized his voice, and dragged myself to his pillow. Ah me! I found him ill, and even in extremity. He asked me to hear his confession: I at once acquiesced in his desire. Dr. Evans, a physician of great experience and of remarkable charity, endeavored to relieve him, and watched by him, but his cares and remedies proved fruitless. I administered extreme unction: he responded to all the prayers with a recollection and piety which increased the esteem that all on board had conceived for him. I could see him sinking. As I was myself in so alarming a state, and fearing that I might be taken away at any moment, and thus share his last abode in this land of pilgrimage and exile, I besought him to hear my confession, if he were yet capable of listen-

ing to me. I knelt, bathed in tears, by the dying couch of my brother in Christ—of my faithful friend—of my sole companion in the lonely desert. To him in his agony, I, sick and almost dying, made my confession! Strength forsook him: soon, also, he lost the power of speech, although he remained sensible to what was passing around him. Resigning myself to God's holy will, I recited the prayers of the agonizing with the formula of the plenary indulgence, which the Church grants at the hour of death. Father Hœcken, ripe for heaven, surrendered his pure soul into the hands of his Divine Redeemer on the 19th of June, 1851, twelve days after our departure from St. Louis. Who would then have foretold it? So ardent were his desires to labor for the glory of God, that he sighed for the wilderness—he thirsted for the salvation of souls! Alas! how many projects annihilated! In any other enterprise it would have proved sufficient motive for discontinuing a perilous journey; but the desire of procuring God's glory endows man with strength that nature denies him.

Father Christian Hœcken was born in Upper Brabant. He was only forty-three years old at his death. The last fifteen years of his life were passed among the Indians, who had conceived the most profound veneration for him. He was all to them—their father in Christ, their physician in illness, their counsel in difficulties, their sincere and faithful friend. When he could share any thing with his poor neophytes, he rejoiced with all the simplicity of a child. His only consolation was to be among them. He was an active instrument in the hands of God to announce his holy word to thousands of pagans. The churches that he built, and the fervent congregations of Indians that he collected and formed, attest his fervor, and the apostolic zeal which animated him. His holy death crowned all his labors. A martyr of charity, he

exercised his sacred ministry to his very agony. Sad, but salutary, will ever be the remembrance of that last solemn and affecting hour. What friends could ever offer, or take a more touching or more religious farewell?

The passengers were deeply moved at the sight of the lifeless corpse of him who had so lately been "all to all," according to the language of the apostle. Their kind father quitted them at the moment in which his services seemed to be the most necessary. I shall always remember with deep gratitude the solicitude evinced by the passengers to the reverend father in his dying moments. My resolution not to leave the body of the pious missionary in the desert, was unanimously approved. A decent coffin, very thick, and tarred within, was prepared to receive his mortal remains: a temporary grave was dug in a beautiful forest, in the vicinity of the mouth of the Little Sioux, and the burial was performed with all the ceremonies of the Church, in the evening of the 19th of June, all on board assisting.

About a month after, on the return of the St. Ange which passed near the venerated tomb, the coffin was exhumed, put on board of the boat, and transported to the Novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Florissant. There repose the mortal remains of Father Hœcken, with those of his brethren. His death, so precious in the sight of God, saddened the hearts of the passengers, but for many it was a salutary sorrow. A great number had not approached the tribunal of penance during long years; immediately after the funeral, they repaired one after another to my cabin to confess.

Five more passengers were also fatally attacked, but received before expiring the consolations of my ministry. The languor and weakness to which the fever had reduced me, quitted me insensibly: after a lapse of some days I found

myself perfectly recovered, so that I was able to celebrate mass on board and devote my whole time to the sick.

As the boat ascended the river and penetrated further into the country, attaining the higher and more open portions of the Indian territory, the epidemic gradually disappeared. We could again give a little time to the contemplation of the beauties of the wilderness, to reflections on the future of these interesting solitudes—above all, of their poor, despised inhabitants. I will describe them in my future letters. They will inform you whatever striking or edifying events happened in my relations with the Indians during the long and dangerous journey which I have just terminated.

Accept, etc.,

P. J. De Smet.

P. S.—The following notice of the death of Rev. F. Hœcken, from "The Shepherd of the Valley," a weekly journal, is attributed to His Grace the Archbishop of St. Louis:

"The Rev. Father Christian Hœcken, of the Society of Jesus, died of cholera, on board the St. Ange, on the Missouri. Those only who have had the happiness of an acquaintance with the deceased can form any idea of the loss religion has sustained by his death. To the knowledge of several Indian languages he joined a perfect understanding of the manners, prejudices, and predilections of the savages. He showed the most devoted attention to their interests, as well temporal as eternal. He enjoyed a robust constitution, united with a great energy of character, which induced him to undertake without hesitation any work that seemed likely to redound to an increase of the glory of God. The qualities which most distinguished him amid his labors and privations were his admirable frankness, his simplicity, his

sound judgment, an ever-joyous and peaceful disposition of mind and heart, and an imperturbable contentment, which the author of this notice has never found to the same degree in any individual. It would be impossible to find a missionary more apostolic, and we are convinced that the illustrious Society of which he was a member, counts no more faithful and fervent religious among her children."

Letter III.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Travels in the Great Desert, 1851.

University of St. Louis, January 18, 1852.

T*****:

The mouth of the river Platte, or Nebraska, is the point of division between the Upper and Lower Missouri. To the early navigators on the river it was a kind of equinoctial, where, as at sea, the Neptunian tribute was exacted of all *pork-eaters*, as all were styled who visited the desert for the first time. No one could escape.

The flat country, or the valley of the Missouri, is covered with dense forests extending from the bank of the river to the high hills that skirt it on either side for from four to six miles in width. The forests are successively replaced by flourishing cities, fine villages, and thousands of beautiful farms. This alluvial soil is probably unequalled on the earth for the richness of some of its productions. The wood is in great demand. As the country is settled and trade becomes more important, steam-mills increase and prepare all kinds of timber and boards; the steamboats, too, consume immense quantities of wood.

Between the Nebraska and the Wasecha, or Vermillion, for about four hundred miles the forests are vast and beautiful, often intersected by rich prairies of turf and verdure. This contrast delights the traveller. Every time he enters

the desert he cannot refrain from admiring this succession of forests and plains, this series of hills which encircle them and present such a variety of forms,—here and there covered with trees and underwood of a thousand kinds, sometimes rising, bold, rugged cliffs, to the height of one or two hundred feet, and then noble plains, ascending gradually, with scattered groves, so pleasing to the sight that art seems to have crowned the work of Nature. We wonder that we do not see farms, barns, and fences. Surely, one just from Europe would think himself on the demesne of some great lord, and would be amazed at not seeing the mansion and its appurtenances.

Nature seems to have lavished its gifts on this region; and without being a prophet, I can predict a future far unlike the past for this desert. The words of the Psalmist will be soon applied—"The earth was created for the abode of man, and to manifest the glory and perfection of the Lord."

These plains, naturally so rich and verdant, seem to invite the husbandman to run the furrow, and promise an ample reward to the slightest toil. Heavy forests await the woodman, and rocks the stone-cutter. The sound of the axe and hammer will echo in this wilderness; broad farms, with orchard and vineyard, alive with domestic animals and poultry, will cover these desert plains, to provide for thick-coming cities, which will rise as if by enchantment, with dome and tower, church and college, school and house, hospital and asylum.

I speak here principally of the region from the mouth of the river Kansas to that of the Niobrarah or *Eau qui coule*, and extending beyond the Black Hills, continuing along their crest to the Rocky Mountains, thence it follows southwardly the already existing limits of Utah, New Mexico, and

Texas. This region contains several large rivers, with numerous tributaries, the principal of which are the Platte, the two rivers just named, and the head-waters of the Arkansas, Osage, and Red. These present the greatest inducements to civilization.

Will not the President of the Republic, like some of his predecessors, pluck some plumes from the Indian eagle, once the emblem of their greatness and power, to place them in the crown composed of the trophies of his administration? In the limits which I trace he will find an extent of country vast enough to be represented by three or four stars more of the first magnitude, which will enhance the lustre of the galaxy of the flag of the Union. This great territory will hold an immense population, destined to form several great and flourishing States.

But, then, what will become of the Indians, who have already come from afar to abide in this land? What will become of the aborigines, who have possessed it from time immemorial? This is, indeed, a thorny question, awakening gloomy ideas in the observer's mind, if he has followed the encroaching policy of the States in regard to the Indian. I have remarked with pleasure one ray of hope in the future for these poor and wretched tribes. They readily send their children to school; they make rapid progress in agriculture, and even in several of the most necessary mechanical arts; they carefully raise poultry and domestic animals. We may then hope that the sad remnant of these numerous nations, who once covered America, now reduced to earn their bread in the sweat of their brow (for they can no longer subsist by hunting), will find an asylum, a permanent abode, and will be incorporated with all the rights of citizens of the Union. It is their only remaining chance of well-being; humanity and justice seem to demand it for them. If they

are again repelled and banished further inland, they will perish infallibly. The Indians who refuse to submit or accept the definitive arrangement, alone favorable to them, would resume the wandering life of the plains, and close their sad existence as the bison and other animals on which they live, vanish.

In the neighborhood of the Mankizitah, or White-earth River, the hills are blackened, and evidently owe this appearance to subterraneous fires. The soil is light and sterile for about a hundred miles; the high hills have little verdure, and the bottom or valley is very narrow. Some of the hills may even be called mountains.

The islands of the Missouri are, in general, well wooded, and present on all sides most agreeable views. On some is found the red cedar, the most durable wood of the country, lasting longer than any other when plunged in water or buried in earth. If we except the space between the Niobrarah and Mankizitah, where the low prairies are rare, and where the upland is almost entirely unwooded, this district has many fine sites, which seem to invite the pioneer, and say, "The time is not far off; here you will raise your cabin and till your field." Coal is also very abundant, and will supply the failure of the forests.

From the Mankizitah to the great bend of the Missouri, and thence to Fort Mandan, and even above the mouth of the Yellowstone, on both banks, the country is very fine; the fertile soil gives most abundant crops. Here and there, on the banks of the great rivers, the forests are pretty fine, while in the upland plains, as you recede from the river, the country is destitute of trees, and even of bushes.

In my visits to the Indian tribes, I have several times traversed the immense plains of the West. I have travelled over various sections, from the frontiers to the Pacific, and

from the Hudson's Bay territory, along the Saskatchewan and Athabasca, to Great Salt Lake, now the head-quarters of the Mormons. Every time that I have travelled over these plains, I have found myself amid a painful void: Europe's thousands of poor, who cry for bread, and wander without shelter or hope, often occur to my thoughts. "Unhappy poor," I often cry, "why are ye not here? Your industry and toil would end your sorrows. Here you might rear a smiling home, and reap in plenty the fruit of your toil." Yes, this void exists; and when I say it must be filled by an industrious and persevering population, I concur with the experience of all travellers.

It would be impossible for me to describe the sombre silence that reigns in this vast desert. You may pass weeks there, on the march, without meeting a living soul. And yet we become habituated to it—like it. Solitude seems to give scope to man's intellectual faculties; the mind seems more vigorous, the thought clearer. It has always seemed to me that when one travels over the plains, he feels more inclined to prayer, meditation, confidence in God, more disposed to resign himself into the hands of Him who alone is our refuge amid perils, and who alone can provide for all our wants. Doubtless the removal of all bustle and business, the constant dangers to which we are exposed from wild animals and enemies, liable to be met at every step, contribute to this.

It has often been remarked that the songs of the birds are more sweet and agreeable here than in the forests of the east. This phenomenon is capriciously attributed to the effects of society. From the scarcity of wood, the birds are forced to perch on the same tree, or seek the same grove, and thus teach each other. It is commonly supposed that the birds in Europe are better singers than those in America: can this be attributed to any other cause than that just given?

If you would have an idea of the topography, vastness, and extent of our western plains, imagine France, Germany, Belgium changed into one single prairie, along water-courses, and intersected here and there by a wood of small extent, or by a very small forest.

You will excuse these little digressions on the localities I have traversed. They will show, withal, to our unbelievers in Europe, that science and civilization may find their account in voyages undertaken for the good of souls and the glory of the Church. And then, too, all these fair and varied objects make us incessantly bless heaven, and say, with the Psalmist, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

At last we reached the Great Bend, where the boat came to land opposite a camp of Iantons, a powerful tribe of the Sioux nation. As soon as these Indians perceived us, they broke out into cries of joy, and honored our arrival by several volleys of musketry. Their women had prepared a great quantity of dry wood; we accepted it thankfully, and they received in return a present of tobacco, lead, flour, coffee, and sugar—the articles they prize most.

The Indians gave us the sad tidings of the ravages which the small-pox was then causing at Post Bonis and its neighborhood, near Little Medicine River, which empties into the Missouri at the upper bay of the Great Bend. This bend is thirty-six miles in circumference, while it is only four miles across by land. At my request, the captain put me ashore, and two hours after I was among the sick. I spent the night with them, giving them all the consolation in my power. Some believed that the disease resembled the great plague in London. The survivors long retained black spots. Even during this contagious disease, the Indians retained their old custom of giving a last abode to the dead, by

placing the body, wrapped in a blanket or buffalo-robe, on scaffolds raised eight or ten feet above the plain. They left them thus exposed to the burning heat of a July sun, the most intense of the year. The pestilential exhalations of these corpses infected the air for miles around.

They showed me in their camp a little orphan boy who had been attacked, and who, given up, had been turned out of the lodge in the midst of the night, during a fearful rain, by his adoptive father, a cruel and unfeeling man. He was still alive in the morning, when a Canadian perceived him, and, like the good Samaritan, carried him to his hut and lavished the most constant care on him. I had the pleasure to see him recovering, and to baptize him.

Some days after, I was at Fort Pierre, situated on the shore, south of the Missouri, about 1500 miles above St. Louis, and near the mouth of the Schicah, or Bad River. The influenza had existed for some time in the fort, and a panic had seized many at the news that the small-pox was in the neighborhood, and the cholera on board. In fact, immediately after we started, the last broke out and carried off many. The Indians, awe-struck at the approach of danger from this implacable scourge, were overjoyed at my presence; the children of the whites and of the Indians encamped around the fort were presented to me, to the number of eighty-two, to be regenerated in the holy waters of baptism.

The same inquietude reigned at the post of the Arickaras. Some couriers had announced the approach of the boat, and spread alarm by reporting that there were contagious diseases on board. But when the people saw that all were well, their fears vanished, and they welcomed the boat with the usual demonstrations on such occasions. Cries of joy burst from two thousand mouths; volleys of cannon and musketry rolled echoing over the plains. The scene was beautiful and

imposing. The fort stands on a high hill, nearly a hundred feet above the level of the river. A long row of Indians, in their gayest costumes, their faces daubed with various colors, lined the shore.

I had galloped on in advance of the boat, to have time to instruct the half-breeds and Canadians, and baptize all their children. I spent two days among them. A great number of Indians, learning of my arrival at the fort, came to shake hands with me from respect, and to bid me welcome. At the same time they earnestly begged me to grant their little children the same benefit of baptism that I had granted the half-breed children. I yielded to their wishes, in consequence of the great danger in which they were. The number of baptisms was about two hundred. Not long after, I heard that the cholera had swept through the village of the Arickaras, and that many of the children had fallen victims. What a consolation, that, by the sacrament, I unlocked the gates of heaven to them!

We now bade farewell to the officers of the fort, to plunge further into the desert. Ere long we passed the Mandan village, composed of large huts covered with earth. This once numerous nation is now reduced to a few families, the only survivors of the small-pox of 1838. Their village lies 1800 miles above the mouth of the Missouri, two hundred below the mouth of the Yellowstone. Some days after, we stopped at Fort Berthold, to land some goods at the great village of the Minataries, or Osier tribe, nicknamed the *Gros Ventres* of Missouri. Their cabins are built like those of the Arickaras and Mandans. Four forks, or rather four forked trees, set in the ground, about twenty feet apart, form a square. These are joined on top by cross-pieces, over which other pieces are laid obliquely, leaving a great opening in the centre, to admit air and give vent to the smoke; these pieces

are woven together with osiers: the whole is covered hay and earth—not with turf, however. An opening is made on one side to receive the door, which consists of a bison-skin. Before the door is a sort of alley, ten or fifteen feet long, inclosed by pickets, and easily defended in case of attack. In the middle of the lodge, under the upper opening which admits the light, a hole about a foot deep is dug to answer as a fireplace. Around the lodge there are beds, one, two, or three feet from the floor, with doe-skins as curtains. The whole village is surrounded by a high and strong pallisade of large trees, squared.

The Minataries raise Indian-corn, squashes, beans, and potatoes. The other permanent villages on the Missouri are those of the Osages, Omahas, Ponkahs, Pawnees, Arickaras, and Mandans. The Minataries are of the same stock as the Crows, and speak about the same language. They say that they separated in consequence of a dispute between two chiefs, over a bison that both claimed to have killed on a hunt.

The great chief of the latter village, called Four Bears, is the most civil and affable Indian that I met on the Missouri. He begged me to baptize his two children and several members of his family. All the children of this tribe had been baptized by Rev. Mr. Bellecourt, a zealous and untiring missionary of the Vicariate Apostolic of Red River, which is under the jurisdiction of Mgr. Provencher. Rev. Mr. Bellecourt has visited these tribes several times, and met with great success in disposing them in favor of our holy religion. I learned, to my consolation, that in all probability a mission would be soon established there, with one or two resident priests, under the direction of Mgr. Provencher.

The place is admirably well chosen, and the benefits of religion will easily spread thence among the neighboring

nations, such as the Mandans, Arickaras, and Assiniboins. These tribes evince great eagerness to hear the word of God and to be instructed in our holy faith, whenever a Catholic missionary visits them. In Europe, the preachers and catechists must use a thousand means to win auditors; here men call priests to instruct them. They are eager for this nourishment of the soul, this word of God, that so many others despise! What an awful account of this heavenly benefit must be one day rendered by men of all ages, especially the young, for whom religious teaching abounds in the churches, colleges, and schools of Europe!

On the 14th of July, the steamboat St. Ange reached our destination, Fort Union. This post is situated at 48° N. I had then to make all my preparations and take all my precautions for my long journey on land. Yet, withal, I found time to instruct and baptize twenty-nine little children, between Fort Union and Fort William, which are only three miles apart. I said mass daily at the fort, and gave an instruction.

Yours, &c.,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter IV.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Journey to the Great Desert in 1851.

(continued.)

University of St. Louis, January 20, 1852.

Sir:

The whole forenoon of the 31st of July, the day on which the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus, was employed in making preparations for our journey into the interior of the country. Mr. Culbertson, superintendent of the forts on the Mississippi and the Yellowstone rivers, is a distinguished man, endowed with a mild, benevolent, and charitable temper, though, if need be, intrepid and courageous. He has always given me marks of kindness and friendship, but most particularly in this last tour. Being at the head of our troop, he was able to aid me in my project.

We numbered thirty-two persons; the greater part were Assiniboins, Minataries, and Crows, who were repairing to the great Indian council to be held in the vicinity of Fort Laramie, and by the same route that we had chosen, and which was scarcely less than 800 miles in length. Two four-wheeled wagons and two carts, for transporting our provisions and our baggage, composed our whole convoy. The four vehicles were in all probability the first that had ever crossed this unoccupied waste. There is not the slightest perceptible vestige of a beaten track between Fort Union

and the Red Buttes, which are on the route to Oregon, and 161 miles west of Fort Laramie.

Having dined, we crossed the river with our baggage. Following the course of one of the little tributaries of the Yellowstone, we advanced about six miles. We had with us a skilful hunter, of the Black-Feet tribe, and he made a happy commencement by bringing us two fine deer as the first fruits of his ability. The mosquitoes attacked us on all sides, leaving us no repose. We were forced to combat them continually with branches, handkerchiefs, and smoke. The last is the most efficacious weapon for dissipating these sanguinary insects, but it is at the same time the most difficult for the traveller to support. Night came on, and brought with it a terrible storm. The thunder rolled above our heads and the clouds discharged torrents of water.

On the 1st of August, at six o'clock in the morning, we resumed our route. We took all possible precaution to avoid meeting any hostile band. The Indians who accompanied us kept their eyes on the earth to discover any recent tracks of an enemy. An extraordinary experience gives them an admirable tact in detecting trails which are imperceptible to others. The foes that our travelling companions dreaded most in the section we were about to traverse, were the Black-Feet and the Sioux. After breakfasting in the neighborhood of the source of the Fox River, we journeyed from morning till night over hilly and undulating plains, bounded by ranges of hills which stretch from the Yellowstone to the Missouri. From time to time we descried promontories in the distance, which serve as guides to the traveller. At the close of the day we pitched our camp at the base of the Tetons of the Yellowstone. These Tetons derive their name from a group of lofty hills situated in one of those delightful valleys which are numerous in these

parts, and which, being surrounded by trees and shrubbery of various kinds, form a most agreeable contrast to the plains that we had just left behind so destitute of wood and water. Wild fruit, such as plums, cherries, gooseberries, sorbs, buffalo-berries, or *Shepherdia angelica*, abound. Among the vegetables and roots we noticed the *Psoralea esculenta*, or Breadroot: its white apple, and its charming white, oval blossom, nearly three inches in circumference, is universally found in this uncultivated solitude, and would deserve a place in a garden of choice plants; the savages value it highly. The wild onion and the sweet onion bear handsome flowers; these plants would undoubtedly improve with culture. The roots of the water-arrow (*Sagittaria rigida*), and those of the wild Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria borealis*), are equally prized by the Indians, who call them *Swan potatoes*. Peanuts are also a delicious and nourishing root, found commonly in low and alluvial lands. The above-named roots form a considerable portion of the sustenance of these Indians during winter. They seek them in the places where the mice and other little animals, in particular the ground-squirrel, have piled them in heaps.

The musquitoes tormented us greatly during the day. They especially worried our horses and mules, which were literally covered with them. For us, we had taken measures against their attacks by covering our heads with sacks formed of coarse gauze.

The distance between the Tetons and Fort Union is about eighty miles. We saw very few deer, and from time to time an antelope or buck was roused from repose and fled at our approach Traces of several kinds of bear, especially the grizzly bear, are very common; the latter are found in the woody places and along the streams and rivulets. We succeeded in killing three, not without great effort and danger.

Our hunter brought us two fine, fat antelopes, which were soon dressed and served up for our supper. One of the Indians killed a skunk (*Mephitis Americana*). The strong odor of this animal is intolerable to the whites; the savages, on the contrary, appear to like it, and deem its flesh exquisite. How true is the proverb: *De gustibus non disputandum!*—there is no accounting for tastes.

On the 2d of August we set out at break of day, and were fanned by a refreshing breeze. The country through which we progressed was full of interest: the valleys were covered with a luxuriant verdure, intermingled with flowers of various hues. Groves of cotton-wood, elm, and ash, as well as groups of service-trees and cherry-trees, offered themselves along the beds of dry rivers and streamlets. We ascended, step by step, the hills which separate the waters of the Missouri from those of the Yellowstone, like so many insuperable barriers furrowed with profound ravines. We triumphed over these obstacles with great difficulty, and at length attained the summit of the hills. There a most magnificent spectacle unrolled itself before our eyes. Nature has accumulated in this spot a great variety of her most fantastical caprices. On one side is displayed a succession of beautiful prairies, here and there interrupted with groves of stunted trees and shrubs, and terminating in verdant hills dotted with groups of cedar and pine; on the other are shapeless heaps of red and white clay and piles of stones, which, viewed at a distance, resemble brick-kilns, from their peculiar color: although thrown together without any apparent order, they add much interest to the landscape.

The region through which we passed for several days furnished evident proofs that it has been strongly volcanic, even at a very recent date, for the surface is still covered with lava and scoriæ. I counted as many as seventy conical hills,

from twenty to a hundred feet in height, grouped in one single plain and in the space of from four to five miles: they had evidently gone through the ordeal of fire. Some of these hills were composed of cinders that the earth in her fiery convulsions appeared to have vomited from her centre. Several times, after having gained some miles on the heights, we found ourselves suddenly facing an almost perpendicular descent, formed of rock and white clay, down which we had to let our vehicles by hand. We then entered into a chain of valleys and fertile prairies watered by springs and rivulets, and embellished with the cotton-wood, elm, ash, cedar, and pine; in other places the summits of the hills are remarkable for their beauty, and the rich undulating plains for their abundant verdure.

On the fourth day of our march we descried thousands of bison; the whole space between the Missouri and the Yellowstone was covered as far as the eye could reach. Hitherto the musquitoes had greatly tormented us, but now they entirely vanished. We sought the cause of this phenomenon. The Indians told us that the absence of our winged enemies was owing to the prodigious number of buffaloes which were grazing in the neighboring plains, and which attracted these insects. In fact, we saw these noble animals throwing the earth on their bodies by means of their horns and feet, or rolling themselves in the sand and dust, and thus filling the air with clouds, in the endeavor to rid themselves of their vexatious followers. The lot of these animals appeared bad enough, for they were pursued day and night. During a whole week we heard their bellowings like the noise of distant thunder, or like the murmurs of the ocean-waves beating against the shore. It may be said that it is the country in which the buffalo and herds of deer are generally found in the greatest abundance. A good hunter

might easily kill here, in the course of a day, several cows, deer, a mountain-goat, a red-tailed and a black-tailed buck, an antelope, hares, and rabbits. He might fire twice upon a grizzly bear, and perhaps meet a gray and a silver fox. To this list of animals we may add the beaver, otter, badger, prairie-dog, and several kinds of wild fowl, principally pheasants and grouse. It is easy to see that our hunters possess the power of selecting a repast. In truth, we regaled ourselves with what was most delicate, and left a great quantity of flesh in the plains for the benefit of the vultures and wolves, whose howlings and rejoicings already resounded on every side.

An Assiniboin gave us a singular proof of his dexterity in the chase; I cannot forbear mentioning it. Alone and on foot, he stealthily approached a large herd of bison cows. As soon as he was near enough to them to allow of their hearing him, he began to imitate the cry of a young calf. At once the cows ran towards the place of concealment of the ingenious hunter, and he killed one of them. The troop, alarmed, withdrew hastily and in great disorder. He reloaded his rifle and renewed his cry; the cows stopped, returned as if by enchantment, and he killed a second. The Assiniboin assured us that he could easily have taken more by the same stratagem, but thinking two cows were enough for us, he suffered the rest to go.

Travellers in these upper regions enjoy an excellent appetite. I have been more than once astonished at the enormous quantity of meat that a man is capable of consuming without injury to his health; it would hardly be credited in Europe. One and even two buffalo-tongues, a side of venison or other meat, and some additional trifles, are not considered a large portion for one meal.

On the 7th of August we crossed lands intersected with

numerous ravines and dried streams. The soil was much lighter than that we last trod; it was covered with a species of wild artemisia, or wormwood—an infallible mark of sterility. The aspect of all the ravines, shores, and beds of rivers and streams, as well as that of every eminence, proves that there are numerous veins of mineral coal in this section. The observations that I made on the quality of the soil, induce me to believe that these deposits of coal extend as far as the numerous coal mines which exist in the territories watered by the Saskatchewan and Athabasca Lake, of which I have already spoken, in my letters in 1845 and 1846, after travelling over those places.

Evident tokens convince the traveller that the immense plains that he is crossing, and on which not even a shrub grows, have not always been destitute of wood. Petrified trunks and entire trees frequently meet the eye. Astonishment and admiration seize the mind, and excite conjectures concerning the manner in which these changes have been wrought. But what answer offer to the question, "Why are not these lands wooded as they must have been in former times?" The steppes of Asia, the pampas of South America, and the western prairies of this hemisphere, seem to possess a common and uniform character; generally speaking, they have neither trees nor shrubs on them. Some observers attribute it to the action of frequent fires which have passed over these localities; others to the change undergone in the climate, or to the natural sterility of the soil; and, in fine, there are some who pretend that some operation or convulsion of nature has destroyed the forests which formerly existed here, and has reduced them to their present condition. I have examined different localities; and the enormous heaps of shells of the testaceous kind and of the genus muscula, which I found some feet distant from the

summits of the loftiest hills, and which were incorporated in alluvial earth, and mingled with sand and water-worn pebbles, convince me that this portion of land has undergone changes as great as they are amazing.

On the same day we traversed a mountainous elevation which stretches as far as the Owl-head Buttes. These buttes or mounds, in this ocean-like prairie, serve as guides to the warrior, the traveller, and the hunter, who can perceive them thirty miles off. From the summit of this extensive eminence we contemplated, with pleasing wonder, the "White Earth country," or clay plains of the Yellowstone. From south to north they measure from thirty to forty miles. When on this height, the imagination discovers the ruins of ancient villages, and one seems to see confused rows of broken columns, forts with their turrets and bastions, towers, domes, walls in decay, castles, and edifices of every sort. Some of these pillars of red and white hardened clay rise to an elevation of from 50 to 100 feet. It would have gratified me much to have passed one or two days in an attentive examination of these volcanic productions. I presume that the soil is not unlike that near the White Earth River, a tributary of the Missouri, and that it contains the same species of interesting fossils.

Similar tracts, which have ceased to be volcanic, are found in the environs of the superior sources of the Rivers Arkansas, Platte, etc., and of the Big Horn, a branch of the Yellowstone. Near the source of the River Puante, which empties into the Big Horn, and the sulphurous waters of which have probably the same medicinal qualities as the celebrated Blue Lick Springs of Kentucky, is a place called *Colter's Hell*—from a beaver-hunter of that name. This locality is often agitated with subterranean fires. The sulphurous gases which escape in great volumes from the burn-

ing soil infect the atmosphere for several miles, and render the earth so barren that even the wild wormwood cannot grow on it. The beaver-hunters have assured me, that the underground noises and explosions are often frightful. However, I think that the most extraordinary spot in this respect, and perhaps the most marvellous of all the northern half of this continent, is in the very heart of the Rocky Mountains, between the 43d and 45th degrees of latitude and 109th and 111th degrees of longitude, that is, between the sources of the Madison and Yellowstone. It reaches more than a hundred miles. Bituminous, sulphurous, and boiling springs, are very numerous in it. The hot springs contain a large quantity of calcareous matter, and form hills more or less elevated, which resemble in their nature, perhaps, if not in their extent, the famous springs of Pemboukkalesi, in Asia Minor, so well described by Chandler. The earth is thrown up very high, and the influence of the elements causes it to take the most varied and the most fantastic shapes. Gas, vapor, and smoke are continually escaping, by a thousand openings, from the base to the summit of the volcanic pile; the noise at times resembles the steam let off by a boat. Strong subterranean explosions occur like those in "*Colter's Hell.*" The hunters and the Indians speak of it with a superstitious fear, and consider it the abode of evil spirits, that is to say, a kind of hell. Indians seldom approach it without offering some sacrifice, or, at least, without presenting the calumet of peace to the turbulent spirits, that they may be propitious. They declare that the subterranean noises proceed from the forging of warlike weapons: each eruption of earth is, in their eyes, the result of a combat between the infernal spirits, and becomes the monument of a new victory or calamity. Near Gardiner River, a tributary of the Yellowstone, and in the vicinity of the region I have just been

describing, there is a mountain of sulphur. I have this report from Captain Bridger, who is familiar with every one of these mounds, having passed thirty years of his life near them.

From the Owl Buttes, where we encamped on the 7th of August, to the source of the Immel, a distance of nearly thirty miles, we travelled on the highlands. The surface was rugged, cut by deep ravines, and excessively difficult to pass with our vehicles. At every step we met volcanic remains. For two days our route offered on the right and left burnt hills, some of which were covered with lava and scoriæ, and had evidently been craters, whence volcanic matter had been ejected into the neighboring plain.

At the decline of the same day, we were witnesses of a singularly beautiful phenomenon. The moon was surrounded by four circles; the first was of a beautiful azure, the second a rich purple, and the third white, while the fourth was obscure or black. In the midst of all these circles the queen of night shone brilliantly. The savages augured from this sign, that some hostile band was near, and passed the whole night in arms, watching.

On the 10th we quitted the highlands and advanced about twenty miles, over a barren, rugged space, excavated by rains. A kind of salamander, vulgarly called "horned frog," lizards, and rattlesnakes, were most abundant. I give you the information I gathered from the Indians concerning the antidotes they employ for curing the bite of the last-named reptile. Blackroot (*Pterocaulon*) is regarded by them as a sovereign remedy against the wound inflicted by this most venomous serpent, and Providence has rendered it very plentiful, precisely in those places in which these snakes are found. The remedy is truly side by side with the ill—for it is sufficient to chew the weed and apply it to the wound,

when the swelling is arrested and disappears. When an Indian, his horse, or his dog, has been bitten by one of these serpents, they pursue the reptile, which dies almost directly after having given its bite. They open its stomach, take out the blood that it has swallowed and apply it to the wound; the swelling subsides at once, and the dangerous effects of the poison are prevented. When the swelling is considerable, the Indians use the sharp bones and the teeth of the rattlesnake to pick and open the swollen skin, and by this means they dissipate or remove the inflammation. The copperhead-snake has a poison so subtle, that its breath alone causes death to him who inhales it. Its tongue is not forked like that of other snakes; it is of a triangular shape. When the reptile is startled and provoked, his head flattens, and he throws from his mouth a great quantity of yellow poison, and then blows till he expires.

On the 11th we arrived at the upper portion of a gently sloping plain. Having crossed it, we found ourselves at Fort Alexander, situated on the banks of the Yellowstone, and at a short distance from the little river Rosebud. Fort Alexander is one hundred miles distant from Fort Union. The winter, it is said, is extremely severe in these regions, commencing in November, and only terminating in the month of April.

Accept, &c.,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter V.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

University of St. Louis, Jan. 24, 1852.

M*****:

After remaining six days at Fort Alexander, allowing our animals time to repose, and also awaiting the arrival of a barge belonging to the American Fur Company, which was freighted with some of our effects, we passed over the Yellowstone on the 17th of August, at about two o'clock. We passed over a high and very level plain: for a distance of five miles the soil is light, sandy, and entirely covered with green toads, as the *voyageurs* call different kinds of cactus—plants that are noted for the splendor of their flowers, and for their grotesque and varied shapes. The round and the oval, about the size of a hen's egg, abound in this plain, and are set with long thorns, hard, and as fine and sharp as needles. When trampled by the horses' feet, these thorns spring up and adhere to the legs and belly of the animals, and thus render them furious and unmanageable. We soon arrived in Rosebud Valley, and continuing our route until sunset, we encamped on the borders of a little river bearing the same name, and quite near a beautiful pond, over which a new dam had been constructed by the beavers.

This section of the country offered us frequent occasions of admiring the labors and ingenious industry of these intelligent animals. They are more numerous here than in any other district I have visited, and I am told that their

preservation is chiefly attributable to the continual excursions of war-parties, either Sioux, Assiniboins, or Black-Feet, all implacable enemies of the Crows, and these prevent the huntsman and the savages from hazarding a chase in these parts. At present, the fur of the beaver is of so little value that their search is almost abandoned. In ancient times the Crows held the beaver in the highest veneration, because this nation imagined that they became beavers after death. This article of their creed entailed the loss of his scalp to many a bold huntsman among the whites, for every Crow Indian considered himself bound to protect, defend, and avenge, even with death, the spirits of *his near relations*, in their second state of existence. During late years this dogma of faith has been erased from their religious code, to the great detriment certainly of the poor beavers. Such superstitions will never wholly disappear until the Catholic faith enlightens these wilds, over which the darkness of paganism still hangs.

For four days we continued ascending the valley of the Rosebud, about one hundred miles, as high as the sources of the river. There again we found the soil light and sandy; it was covered with wild rose-bushes, cactus, and artemisia of several varieties, and intersected with ravines which were exceedingly difficult to be crossed with baggage-wagons. The shores of this river relieve the eye with an occasional group of cotton-wood, intermingled with plum, cherry, and service trees, which thrive here in undisturbed plenty.

The Little Wolf Mountains, whose rivulets give rise to the Rosebud River, have in general a charming appearance in their hills and acclivities—and in their combined aspect as a whole chain. The absence of water, especially of spring-water, is a painful privation to travellers in this season of the year. We found, indeed, some holes of stagnant water,

in the dry beds of the rivers, but the taste is almost insupportable. The buffalo-herds are less numerous here than in the lands lying further north,, owing no doubt to bands of warriors that roam over the space. Yet we perceived at every moment large troops of stags, and a great many deer and mountain-sheep. We remarked recent traces of enemies—such as the slain carcasses of very dangerous wild animals, the impress of human feet in the sand, concealed encampments, and half-quenched fires. Consequently we redoubled our vigilance, in order to avoid a perilous surprise. A beautiful chief's-coat, of scarlet cloth, and trimmed with gold lace, suspended from the branch of a tree, was perceived waving in the air like a floating banner. There was a race to win the prize; an Assiniboin having carried it off, it was most carefully scrutinized. The conclusion was, that it had been offered only the day before by some Black-Foot chief. These Indians, when on the war-path, frequently make such offerings either to the sun or to the moon, hoping thus to render them propitious, so that through their intervention they may obtain many scalps and horses. The most precious objects which they possess and which they esteem most, are often thus sacrificed. The Mandans, the Arickaras, and their neighbors, go still further: they cut off fingers, and make deep incisions in the fleshy parts of the body before starting for war, in order to obtain the same favors of their false gods. On my last visit to these Riccaries, Minataries, and Mandans, I could not discern a single man at all advanced in years whose body was not mutilated, or who possessed his full number of fingers. How profound their ignorance! How fearful the idolatry in which these unhappy tribes are plunged! To this sombre picture we may add a passionate love of gaming, which consumes the hours which should be devoted to necessary repose; a sloth which nothing but hun-

ger can arouse; an innate inclination to dissimulation, gluttony, and to whatever can flatter sensuality. And still, amid this ocean of miseries, they feel an indescribable need of invoking a power superior to man: they listen attentively to any instruction which reveals to them the means of procuring his favor, and give them information of his attributes. They love the missionary, and ever listen to him with delight; and in his quality of priest receive him with friendship and respect. To judge by the respect and friendship shown me as a priest, on all occasions and circumstances, by the Indians on the Upper Missouri, I am satisfied that if a few zealous priests were stationed here, they would soon become generous Christians, full of zeal and ardor for the glory of our God and his holy law. "They would know their Father who is in heaven, and Him whom he has sent on earth;" they would become faithful disciples of the Redeemer, who so ardently desires the salvation of all, and who did not disdain to shed his blood for them on the cross.

On the 22d of August we quitted the valley of the Rosebud, and crossed the mountainous train which separates it from Tongue River. The crest of this chain presents a continuation of sandstone cliffs, under a multitude of varied and fantastical shapes. The sides are almost perpendicular, and consequently very difficult to ascend or descend with our wagons. The aid of every arm was necessary to sustain the teams. For several days we had to camp by a pond filled with disgusting water. How agreeable the contrast to find ourselves on the borders of this beautiful river, the waters of which are pure as crystal! How eagerly did we allay our burning thirst! The horses and mules appeared to rejoice, neighing and rearing with impatience; as soon as their bridles were loosened, they plunged into the waves and indulged in long draughts. When the whole caravan had

assuaged their thirst, we continued our route. We traversed an undulating plain; and perceiving in the distance a prominent point of land which appeared sparkling with crystals, we named it Diamond Hill. It was covered with enormous masses of mica. For the first time since we left Fort Alexander we breakfasted beside beautiful springs of fresh water, the most remarkable in the country. After advancing about twenty-three miles that day, we camped on the banks of Tongue River. There we had a new occasion to recall and arrange our recollections of the land we had seen. Coal also appears as abundant south of the Yellowstone as above it; we met it everywhere. The slopes of the hills are well wooded with larch and pines of every variety up to the very summit, throughout the whole extent of the Little Wolf chain. This we left for that of the Great Wolf, which we reach before arriving at the Black Hills. These mountains form spurs of the Rocky Mountains; the principal summits are over 13,000 feet high. On the 23d we left Tongue River. For ten hours we marched over mountain and valley, following the course of one of its tributaries, making, however, only about *twenty-five miles*. On the day following we crossed a chain of lofty mountains to attain the Lower Piny Fork, nearly twenty miles distant. We arrived quite unexpectedly on the borders of a lovely little lake about six miles long, and my travelling companions gave it *my name*. There our hunters killed several wild ducks. On quitting the lake, we discovered another elevated portion of land on which red mounds and scoriæ, volcanic remains, are scattered in all directions, as far as the Upper Piny Fork; and there petrified trees are met with at every step. Towards evening we encamped at the base of a mountain, after advancing about twenty-five miles, and thought ourselves favored in finding a pool of water. The next twenty-four

miles were taken in the direction of Sandy River, through undulating plains and mountainous hills.

On the 27th of August we reached Powder River, one of the principal tributaries of the Yellowstone. Our wagoners will not soon forget the difficulty of conducting their teams through this last route, for it was a very miserable, elevated, sterile plain, covered with wormwood and intersected with countless ravines, and they vowed they would never be caught driving a wagon there again.

The valley of the Powder River, in the neighborhood of the Buttes aux Callebasses, which are in sight, is three or four miles wide. Although the soil was light, the verdure was fine and the grazing abundant. The part where I crossed the valley is well wooded, and they told me that wood, especially cotton-wood and fruit trees, is abundant all along the river. This valley forms a beautiful contrast with the high plains of these parts, which are the very picture of aridity and desolation, with naught but weeds, rocks, and deep ravines.

Here we happened to meet with three young Indians of the Crow tribe. They had been on the lookout for a Sioux camp, intending to steal horses, but had not succeeded. These young men advised us to pursue the vale of a little river which they pointed out to us, assuring us that by taking that direction we should soon arrive at Fort Laramie. I was surprised at this counsel, for the course of the valley was southwest; however, we followed the route indicated by the Crows. This proved the most rugged and difficult part of our journey, hence we styled it "the valley of a thousand miseries." A name could not have been better chosen. Imagine a river with perpendicular banks, winding in a serpentine course through a narrow valley, so that in a distance of three miles we were obliged to cross it ten or twelve

times, with carts and wagons, at the imminent risk of killing our horses and mules and destroying our vehicles. The soil, too, was sterile, and as we journeyed on water became scarce—on the fifth day it failed completely, and it did again on the last. The night that ensued was a hard trial, for after so long a march we had not a drop of water to quench our burning thirst.

On the 1st of September, having traversed three chains of hills, we gradually attained the summit of the Black Hills We had one cart less, and one heavy wagon so broken that it had to be tied together with strips of raw buffalo-hide. From the summit we were so happy as to perceive a distant lake. We eagerly hastened in that direction, for we were consumed with thirst, and had serious fears for our beasts of burden, which were slackening their weary pace. To our astonishment, we directly perceived that we were still at a great distance from Fort Laramie. Instead of being near that fort, in accordance with the assurances of the three Crows, we discovered ourselves in sight of the Red Buttes, twenty-five miles off. This is a well-known spot on the "Great Oregon Route," and is one hundred and sixty miles from Fort Laramie. On the top of the Black Hills I left a little souvenir of my passage,—on a very high rock of a remarkable form, I carved a large and handsome cross. Ah! may the Indian tribes scattered throughout the wild solitude soon learn the great truths which this holy emblem announces! May they soon leave the bondage in which error has chained them during innumerable ages!

The whole region over which we passed, south of the Yellowstone, offers only feeble hopes to civilization. The soil is light, wood scarce, and water wanting during a large portion of the year. It is a country favorable solely to hunters and wandering tribes. All the animals common in the wilder-

ness abound, and during long years to come they will rest undisturbed in their possessions. When all the fertile tracts, yet vacant in the immense Indian territory, will be occupied, then only will the lands below the Yellowstone attract attention; then alone will necessitous and persevering industry succeed in drawing any considerable portion of this region from its present barrenness.

In the neighborhood and along the base of the Black Hills there lies a very extensive tract of fertile and tillable land. The verdure is rich and abounds in all the valleys, and these valleys penetrate the mountains like so many veins, where millions of domestic animals might be raised; for the springs and rivulets so seldom occurring in the central section between the Yellowstone and the Black Hills, are very numerous in the interior and at the base of these mountains. There are also a great many sites favorable to the erection of mills. The climate is reputed delightful, and the noble forests of cedar and pine would abundantly supply the necessities of a population. Mines of lead and iron are very numerous.

The 2d day of September we found ourselves on the "Great Route to Oregon," over which, like successive ocean surges, the caravans, composed of thousands of emigrants from every country and clime, have passed during these latter years to reach the rich gold mines of California, or to take possession of the new lands in the fertile plains and valleys of Utah and Oregon. These intrepid pioneers of civilization have formed the broadest, longest, and most beautiful road in the whole world—from the United States to the Pacific Ocean. On the skirts of this magnificent way there is an abundance of grass for supplying the cattle and animals appertaining to the caravans which are incessantly travelling on it, from early spring to autumn, every succeeding year.

Our Indian companions who had never seen but the narrow hunting-paths, by which they transport themselves and their lodges, were filled with admiration on seeing this noble highway, which is as smooth as a barn-floor swept by the winds, and not a blade of grass can shoot on it on account of the continual passing. They conceived a high idea of the countless *White Nation*, as they express it. They fancied that all had gone over that road, and that an immense void must exist in the land of the rising sun. Their countenances testified evident incredulity when I told them that their exit was in nowise perceived in the *lands of the whites*.

They styled the route the *Great Medicine Road of the Whites*. The term medicine is applied by them to whatever they find grand, religious, mysterious, or incomprehensible. They visited and examined in detail all the forsaken camping-grounds on the way; they brought a great variety of objects to me to have their use and signification explained; they filled their pouches with knives, forks, spoons, basins, coffee-pots, and other cooking articles, axes, hammers, etc. With the bits of earthen ware which bore any figure or inscription, they fabricated some ornament for their necks and ears. How wonderful will be the accounts given of the *Great Medicine Road* by our unsophisticated Indians when they go back to their villages, and sit in the midst of an admiring circle of relatives.

But these relics collected by our savage friends were not the sole vestiges of the great multitude of emigrants who, in search of gold, had crossed this vast plain with a rare courage and unheard-of fatigues and difficulties. The bleached bones of domestic animals disseminated profusely along the route; the rising mound hastily made over the grave of a parent or a friend deceased during the long journey, and the tribute offered to memory in a coarse and

rudely-carved inscription on a narrow strip of board or on a stone, with other graves which offered no such testimonial of affection, furnish ample and melancholy proofs that death had considerably thinned their ranks. By such disasters thousands of emigrants have found themselves suddenly arrested, and been mocked in the flattering hope of wealth and pleasure.

The countless fragments of conveyances, the heaps of provisions, tools of every kind, and other objects with which the emigrants must have provided themselves at great expense, but which the most impatient, eager to outstrip others in the Western Eldorado, had forsaken and cast aside, testify to that bold recklessness with which they hazard every thing in this enterprise which has proved fatal to thousands. The picture traced by Thornton in his Journal of 1848, is the most shocking that can be contemplated. Arrived in the arid lands of California, the famine had at first reduced them to eating their horses and mules; soon they had recourse to dead bodies; then the dying were not spared, and at last they actually devoured each other! What a salutary proof of the uncertainty that accompanies the grandest perspectives in the life of man, and of the deceptions that unveil to him his native weakness!

We followed the great road south of the Platte to the foot of the Great Black Hills. On this road we found ourselves relieved from those obstacles which had so often endangered our vehicles and our animals. After eight days' journey along the Platte, we arrived at Fort Laramie without the least trouble or accident. The commander of the fort informed us that the Great Council was to take place at the mouth of Horse River, in a vast plain situated nearly thirty-five miles lower down on the Platte. The next day I accepted the polite invitation of the respected Col. Campbell,

and took a seat in his carriage. We arrived at the plain of the intended council about sunset. There the superintendent, Col. M. Mitchell, received me with warm friendship and cordiality, and insisting that I should become his guest during the whole time of the council. All the others showed me great respect.

In this immense plain above-mentioned, we found about a thousand lodges, that is to say, ten thousand Indians, representing Sioux, Sheyennes, and Rapahos, with several deputations from the Crows, Snakes, or Soshonies, Arickaras, Assiniboins, and Minataries. I purpose entertaining you in my next with the object of the council, and of my interviews with the Indians.

Accept, etc.,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

P. S.—I subjoin a list of the animals killed by our hunters from the 1st of August till the 9th of September, 1851: 2 deer, 11 antelopes, 37 bison cows, 22 bulls, 3 bears, 2 stags, 7 Rocky-Mountain sheep, 2 badgers, 2 polecats, 1 porcupine, 1 wolf, 17 hares and rabbits, 13 ducks, 18 heathcock, 16 pheasants.

Letter VI.

To the Director of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Journey to the Great Desert in 1851.

University of St. Louis, January 26, 1852.

M*****:

During the eighteen days that the Great Council lasted, the union, harmony and amity that reigned among the Indians were truly admirable. Implacable hatreds, hereditary enmities, cruel and bloody encounters, with the whole past, in fine, were forgotten. They paid mutual visits, smoked the calumet of peace together, exchanged presents, partook of numerous banquets, and all the lodges were open to strangers. A practice occurring but on the most amicable and fraternal occasions was seen—this is, the adopting of children and of brothers on each side. There was a perfect unanimity of views between Col. Mitchell, superintendent of the Indian Territory, and Major Fitzpatrick, and nothing was omitted to foster these germs of peace. The object of the assembly was a distinguished proof of the highest benevolence on the part of the United States Government, as well as of the sincere desire of establishing a lasting peace among tribes hostile to each other, and of obtaining a right of passage through their possessions for the whites, and making the Indians compensation for injuries and losses the latter may have sustained from the whites.

At the opening of the council, the superintendent made known to the savages that the object of the assembly was

the acceptation by them of the treaty, such as it had been prepared beforehand, with the consent of the President of the United States. This treaty was read sentence by sentence, and distinctly explained to the different interpreters, that they might have the exact and legitimate meaning of each article. The preamble explains that it is a treaty between the agents named on one side by the President of the United States, and on the other by the chiefs or braves of the Indian nations that reside south of the Missouri, east of the Rocky Mountains, and north of the boundary line of Texas and Mexico, viz.: The Sioux or Dacotahs, the Sheyennes, the Arapahos, the Crows, the Minataries, the Mandans, and Arickaras. The principal articleswere:

Art. 1*st.*—The Indians recognize and admit the right of the United States to form roads and establish military posts in their territory. *Art.* 2*d.*—Solemn obligations agreed upon for the maintenance of peace, and for repairing the damages and losses sustained by the whites on the part of the Indians. *Art.* 3*d.*—Indemnity accorded to the Indians for the destruction caused in their hunting-grounds, their forests, pasturages, etc., by travellers from the States who cross their lands. The present of $50,000 is granted to them on this ground. *Art.* 4*th.*—During fifteen coming years, $50,000 will be annually paid in objects and gifts which may prove useful or necessary to the Indians.

The treaty was signed by the agents of the United States, and by all the principal chiefs of the different nations who were present. Another treaty in favor of the half-breeds and the whites residing in the country was proposed, to-wit: That a tract of country be assigned them for their use, in order to form agricultural establishments and colonies, and that they should obtain the assistance of the Government of the United States in the execution of their project.

This is the sole means of preserving union among all those wandering and scattered families, which become every year more and more numerous, and of establishing them in one or two colonies, with churches and schools, for their general instruction and well-being.

With a few exceptions, all the half-breeds are baptized and received as children of the Church. During twenty years they have petitioned to have Catholic priests, and have manifested their good-will to meet the wants of their missionaries, and to maintain them. If ecclesiastical superiors are not aided to make timely provision, it is to be feared that the care of these new colonies will pass under the direction of men who will spare no exertion to extinguish in the hearts of the courageous and simple people the germs of faith, and the good wishes they entertain in favor of our holy religion. The question, "*Shall they have priests?*" involves the salvation of several thousand souls. It must be soon decided; it is already agitated, and unless Catholic missionaries are sent there, I repeat it, it is to be feared that persons hostile to the true faith may take possession of the ground.

On the second Sunday of September, Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, three days after my arrival, some lodges of buffalo-hides were arranged and ornamented as a sanctuary, on the plain of the Great Council. Under this tent I had the happiness of offering the Holy Sacrifice, in presence of all the gentlemen assisting at the council, of all the half-bloods and whites, and of a great concourse of Indians. After my instruction, twenty-eight children (half-bloods), and five adults, were regenerated in the holy waters of baptism, with all the ceremonies prescribed by the Church.

The Canadians, French, and half-breeds who inhabit the Indian territory, treat all the priests who visit them with great kindness, attention, and respect. It is truly afflicting

to meet them in this wilderness, like so many strayed sheep. By the zealous efforts of two good clergymen, fine missions could be founded among them—these would furnish catechists, and these latter would labor in concert with the priests for the conversion of so many benighted pagans, who wander forsaken in the deserts, and destitute of religious hope and consolation.

During the two weeks that I passed in the plain of the Great Council, I paid frequent visits to the different tribes and bands of savages, accompanied by one or more of their interpreters. These last were extremely obliging in devoting themselves to my aid in announcing the gospel. The Indians listened eagerly to my instructions. Each time that I addressed them concerning the particular vices which I knew reigned among them, they owned their faults with admirable simplicity and candor, free from all human respect. During an instruction in the camp of the Ogallallahs, a Sioux tribe, in which I explained to them the ten commandments, when I arrived at the sixth and seventh, a general whispering and embarrassed laugh took place among my barbarous auditory. I inquired the reason of this conduct, and explained to them that the law I came to announce to them was not mine, but God's, and that it was obligatory on all the children of men; that the word of God required all their attention and respect: that those who observe his commandments will have eternal life, while the prevaricators of his holy law shall receive hell and its torments as their lot. The great chief at once rose and replied: "Father, we hear thee; we knew not the words of the Great Spirit, and we acknowledge our ignorance. We are great liars and thieves; we have killed; we have done all the evil that the Great Spirit forbids us to do; but we did not know those beautiful words; in future we will try to live better, if thou wilt but stay with us and teach us."

They besought me to explain baptism to them, as several of them had been present when I baptized the half-blood children. I complied with their request, and gave them a lengthy instruction on its blessings and obligations. All then entreated me to grant this favor to their infants. The next day the ceremony took place ; 239 children of the Ogallallahs (the first of their tribe) were regenerated in the holy waters of baptism, to the great joy and satisfaction of the whole nation. I held daily conferences on religion, sometimes with one band of Indians, sometimes with another. They all listened with great attention, and unanimously expressed the wish to be supplied with Catholic missionaries.

Among the Rapahos, I baptized 305 little ones; among the Sheyennes, 253 ; and among the Brules and Osage Sioux, 280 ; in the camp of the Painted Bear, 56. The number of the half-bloods that I baptized in the plain of the Great Council and on the River Platte, is 61. In the different forts on the Missouri, I baptized, during the months of June and July last, 392 children. Total number of baptisms, 1586. A great number died shortly after, in consequence of diseases which reigned in the Indian camps.

I witnessed, for the first time, a singular rite, to which the Sheyennes attach as much importance as the Asiatic tribes do to circumcision ; this is the " ear-cutting of the children." This custom appears to be common among all the tribes of the Upper Missouri, and probably in other places, though there may be perhaps some variety in the form of the ceremony. Among the Sheyennes, the mother chooses the operator, and puts the knife into his hands. She extends the child on the skin of some animal, carefully prepared and painted, and which the Canadians call *pare fleche.* While one of the relations or friends holds the infant in a quiet posture, the operator makes five incisions in the rim of each ear.

These incisions are destined to receive and carry ornaments. The mother makes a present of a horse to the operator, and another present to each one of the assistants.

In the same place, rudely arranged for the occasion, and composed of six lodges, each lodge consisting of twenty hides of bison cow, we witnessed another ceremony. The Soshonies, or Snake Indians, had scarcely quitted the Rocky Mountains to repair to the Great Council, when they were pursued and attacked by a party of Sheyennes, who killed two of their men, and carried away their scalps. The Sheyennes must pay, or "cover the body," which is a satisfaction required by the savages on such occasions, before they can accept the calumet of peace, or smoke it together. On this day the principal braves of the Sheyenne nation, and forty warriors of the Soshonies, were assembled. Several orations were delivered as preliminaries of peace.

Then followed a feast, of which all partook. It consisted simply of corn, crushed and thoroughly boiled. The dogs were spared this time, for the Soshonies are an exception to the common rule among the Indians; that is, they never eat dog-flesh. The feast over, the Sheyennes brought suitable presents of tobacco, blankets, knives, pieces of red and blue cloth, and deposited them in the centre of the circle. The two scalps were also exposed, and then returned to the brothers of the two wretched victims, who were seated at the head of the circle, between the two chiefs of their nation. The brothers were solemnly assured that the "scalp-dance"* did not take place. They wore, however, a very sombre air,

* This ceremony, which is an essential condition, consists of dances and songs. The latter recount all the exploits of the braves. The ceremony is renewed every day, and often lasts several weeks. Women, old and young, as well as children, can take part; and, in fact, the women make most noise and exertion.

and on accepting the scalps were deeply affected. However, they embraced the murderers, received the donations, and distributed the larger portion of them to their companions. After this, the usual signs of peace and amity, presents and reciprocal adoptions of children, were interchanged; their orators employed all their eloquence to strengthen the good-feeling which appeared to reign in the assembly, and to render it lasting. The next night the Sheyennes visited the lodges of the Soshonies, who were encamped beside my little tent. Songs and dances were prolonged till daylight, and prevented me from sleeping. These amusements among the Indians are perfectly innocent. I have never been able to detect the slightest gesture that could offend modesty. During my waking hours that night I reflected on the excellent dispositions of these pagans, and thought, could the clergy of Europe but know them, they would eagerly hasten hither to gladden our Holy Mother, the Church, with thousands of new children.

During this assembly, as on other occasions, I frequently remarked the skill and facility with which the Indians communicate their ideas by signs and gestures. Their movements are highly expressive, and appear to be reduced to a language as perfect and communicable as that of the deaf and dumb among us. By means of these signs an Indian will relate the chief events of his life. This mute speech may be styled a language of precaution and defence, for when they meet in the desert, in their excursions, they make signs while yet very far apart, before they approach. They immediately know with whom they have to deal, and of what there is in question. They have, however, still more remarkable modes of communicating thought. The large figures displayed on their buffalo-robes are hieroglyphics, as easily understood by an intelligent Indian as written words

are by ourselves; and they often contain the narrative of some important event. This is not, however, because words are wanting in their various dialects, which are quite copious and expressive.

I attended the council from the outset to the close. As I have already stated, ten thousand Indians, belonging to different tribes, many of which had been at war from time immemorial, met on the same plain. During the twenty-three days of the assembly there was no disorder: on the contrary, always peaceable and tranquil, which is saying much for Indians. They seemed all to form but a single nation. Polite and kindly to each other, they spent their leisure hours in visits, banquets, and dances; spoke of their once interminable wars and divisions as past things, to be absolutely forgotten, or "buried," according to their expression. There was not a remark in all their conversations to displease; never did the calumet pass in peace through so many hands. To convey an idea of the importance of this action, I must observe, that smoking the calumet together is equivalent to a treaty confirmed by oath, which no one can contravene without dishonoring himself in the eyes of all his tribe. It was really a touching spectacle to see the calumet, the Indian emblem of peace, raised heavenward by the hand of a savage, presenting it to the Master of life, imploring his pity on all his children on earth, and begging him to confirm the good resolutions which they had made.

Notwithstanding the scarcity of provisions felt in the camp before the wagons came, the feasts were numerous and well attended. No epoch in Indian annals, probably, shows a greater massacre of the canine race. Among the Indians the flesh of the dog is the most honorable and esteemed of all viands, especially in the absence of bison and other animals. On the present occasion it was a last resource. The

carnage then may be conceived. I was invited to several of these banquets; a great chief, in particular, wished to give me a special mark of his friendship and respect for me. He had filled his great kettle with little fat dogs, skins and all. He presented me, on a wooden platter, the fattest, well boiled. I found the meat really delicate, and I can vouch that it is preferable to sucking-pig, which it nearly resembles in taste.

The Indians regaled me several times with a dish highly esteemed among them. It consists of plums, dried in the sun, and afterwards prepared with pieces of meat, like a stew. I must own that I found it quite palatable. But hear what I learned subsequently, as to their manner of preparing it. When an Indian woman wishes to preserve the plums, which grow in profusion here, she collects a great quantity, and then invites her neighbors to her lodge to pass an agreeable afternoon. Their whole occupation then consists in chatting and sucking the stones from the plums, for they keep only the skins, which, after being sun-dried, are kept for grand occasions.

The wagons containing the presents destined by the government to the Indians, reached here on the 20th of September. The safe arrival of this convoy was an occasion of general joy. Many were in absolute destitution. The next day the wagons were unloaded and the presents suitably arranged. The flag of the United States floated from a tall staff before the tent of the superintendent, and a discharge of cannon announced to the Indians that the division of the presents was about to take place. Without delay, the occupants of the various camps flocked in,—men, women, and children,—in great confusion, and in their gayest costume, daubed with paints of glaring hues, and decorated with all the gewgaws they could boast. They took the respective

places assigned to each particular band, thus forming an immense circle, covering several acres of land, and the merchandise was displayed in the centre. The view of such an assembly would give an interesting theme to a Hogarth or a Cruikshank.

The great chiefs of the different nations were served first, and received suits of clothes. You may easily imagine their singular movements on appearing in public, and the admiration which they excited in their comrades, who were never weary inspecting them. The great chiefs were, for the first time in their lives, pantalooned; each was arrayed in a general's uniform, a gilt sword hanging at his side. Their long, coarse hair floated above the military costume, and the whole was crowned by the burlesque solemnity of their painted faces.

Colonel Mitchell employed the Indians as his agents in distributing the presents to the various bands. The arrangements were characterized by benevolence and justice. The conduct of this vast multitude was calm and respectful. Not the slightest index of impatience or of jealousy was observed during the distribution; each band appeared indifferent until its portion was received. Then, glad, or satisfied, but always quiet, they removed from the plain with their families and their lodges. They had heard the good news that the bison were numerous on the south fork of the Platte, three days' march from the plain, and they hastily turned their steps in that direction, resolved to make the buffaloes atone for the hunger they had recently suffered on the great council plain.

This assembly will form an era among them, and I trust will be ever dear to their memories. It closed on the 23d of September.

The happy results of this council are, no doubt, owing to

the prudent measures of the commissaries of government, and more especially to their conciliatory manners in all their intercourse and transaction with the Indians. The council will doubtless produce the good effects they have a right to expect. It will be the commencement of a new era for the Indians—an era of peace. In future, peaceable citizens may cross the desert unmolested, and the Indians will have little to dread from the bad white man, for justice will be rendered to him.

Accept, &c.,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter VII.

To the Editor of Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Journey to the Great Desert in 1851.

University of St. Louis, Jan. 30, 1852.

M****:

Quite late in the afternoon of the 23d of September I bade farewell to the Creoles, Canadians, and half-bloods. I exhorted them to live well, and to pray to God, and to hope that he would soon send them spiritual succor for their temporal and eternal happiness, and that of their children. I shook hands for the last time with the great chiefs and with a large number of Indians, and addressed them some encouraging words, and promised to plead their cause with the great chiefs of the Black-gowns, and make known the desire, good intentions, and hopes they had expressed to me, while they would daily, in all sincerity of heart, implore the "Master of Life" to send them zealous priests to instruct them in the way of salvation, which Jesus Christ, his only Son, came to trace to his children on earth.

I directed my course towards "the springs," situated about fourteen miles distant, in the vicinity of the trading-house at Robidoux, for Colonel Mitchell had named this as the rendezvous for all those who proposed going directly to the United States. On the 24th, before sunrise, we set out in good and numerous company. I visited, in my way, two trading-houses, in order to baptize five half-blood children.

In the course of the day we passed the famous Chimney-rock, so often described by travellers. I had already seen it, in 1840 and 1841, in my first visit to the Rocky Mountains, and mentioned it in my letters. I found it considerably diminished in height.

We cast a last look upon the singular productions of nature, the Castle and the Tower, which are near the Chimney, and resemble the ruins of lordly residences scattered over several acres, and presenting a very elevated and broken surface, amid a level plain.

Arrived on the Platte, at the place known as Ash Hollow, we turned our steps towards the South Fork, fifteen miles away, over a beautiful rolling country of great elevation. Here we met the Prince P., accompanied only by a Prussian officer, on their way to enjoy a hunt in the Wind River Mountains. We exchanged our little news, and received with pleasure the interesting information which the prince gave us. His excellency must be indeed courageous, to undertake at his age so long a journey in such a wilderness, with but one man as suite, and in a wretched little open wagon, which carried the prince and his officer, as well as their whole baggage and provisions. Later, I learned that the prince intends to choose a location suited to agriculture, for the purpose of founding a German colony.

We live in an age when wonders multiply; we cannot say what, in the way of colonization, may not come to pass in a short time, after witnessing the success of the Mormons, who in less than five years have changed the face of a frightful desert, and live there in great abundance. Yet I am free to maintain, that if the prince has really formed the plan ascribed to him, which I scarcely credit, I pity from the bottom of my heart those who first embark in the expedition. The enemies whom they would have to meet are still too

powerful: Crows, Black-Feet, Sioux, Sheyennes, Rapahos, and Snakes, are the most feared and warlike of the desert.

A colony established in such a neighborhood, and against the will of the numerous warlike tribes in the vicinity of those mountains, would run great dangers and meet heavy obstacles. The influence of religion alone can prepare these parts for such a transformation. The threats and promises of colonists, their guns and sabres, would never effect what can be accomplished by the peaceful word of the Black-gown, and the sight of the humanizing sign of the cross.

From the crossing of the South Fork to the junction of the Great Forks, the distance is reckoned to be seventy-five miles, and thence to Fort Kearney one hundeed and fifty miles. Wood is very rare between the Platte and the Nebraska. From the junction of the two Forks to the mouth of the valley is six or eight miles wide, while the bed of the river is about two miles in width. In the spring, at the melting of the snows, when this river is high, it presents a magnificent sheet of water, with numerous isles and islets covered with verdure, and skirted with cotton-trees and willows. In the autumn, on the contrary, it loses all interest and beauty. Its waters then escape into a great number of almost imperceptible passages and channels among the sand-banks which cover the bed through its whole length and extent.

When wood fails, as frequently happens on the banks of the Platte or Nebraska, the meals are cooked at fires of bison-dung, which, when dried, burns like turf.

The soil of the Nebraska is in general rich and deep, mingled, however, with sand in several localities. There is a great variety of grasses, which with numerous shrubs, covered with flowers of dazzling beauty, present a wide field of study to the lover of botany. As we retire from the vale, a

very sensible change is perceptible in the productions of the soil: instead of the former robust and vigorous vegetation, the plains are overgrown with a short, crisp grass; however, it is very nourishing, and eagerly sought by the herds of buffalo and countless wild animals that graze on them.

We arrived at Fort Kearney on the 2d of October, where Colonel Mitchell, the superintendent, held a conference with a deputation of some twenty Pawnee chiefs and braves. They expressed their regret that, not having assisted at the great council, they found themselves excluded from the advantages that the treaty would secure to the other nations, and had no share in the presents made by the government. They all made solemn promises to adhere to the spirit of the treaty, and to execute the orders of their "Great Father the President," who desired that they should live peaceably with all their neighbors, and decreed the cessation of all depredations exercised against travellers from the United States who cross this territory. These Pawnee chiefs and warriors received with all the politeness of Indian customs the various deputations which accompanied us on their way to Washington,—that is, the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Rapahos, hitherto their mortal enemies,—regaling them with banquets, dances, and songs. "My heart leaps with joy," shouted a chief of the Pawnee Wolves, "because I find myself in presence of those that from my infancy I have been taught to consider as my mortal foes. Sheyennes, I and my warriors have made many incursions into your territories, to steal your horses, and rob you of your scalps. Yes, my heart bounds with delight, for it had never dreamed of meeting you face to face, and of touching your hand in friendship. You see me here poor—I have not a horse to mount. Well, I will gladly go on foot the remainder of my days, if the tomahawk is to be buried by all." He offered the calumet

to all the deputies, and several accepted it. A young Sheyenne chief, named "He who mounts the clouds," refused to touch it, and thus answered the Pawnee: "Neither thou nor thy people have invited me into your territory. My father," added he, pointing to the superintendent, "requested me to follow him, and I follow him: I accept not thy calumet of peace, lest I betray thee. Perchance while I now speak to thee, our brave warriors seek the lodges of thy tribe. No! I will not deceive thee, therefore know that peace exists not between me and thee. I speak thus fearlessly and clearly, for I stand beneath the banner of my father."

The allusions of the Sheyenne seemed not to mar the existing harmony; the dances, songs, speeches, and banquets were kept up till late in the night.

The following are the names of the Indian deputies.

The Sheyenne envoys are—*Voki vokammast*, or The White Antelope; *Obalawska*, or Red Skin; and *Voive atoish*, or The man that mounts the clouds.

The Rapaho deputies are—*Nehununtah*, or Eagle's Head; *Nocobotha*, or The Tempest; and *Vash*, or Friday.

The Sioux deputies are—*Haboutzelze*, or The Unicorn; *Kaive ou nêve*, or The Little Chief; *Pouskawit cah cah*, or The Shellman; *Chakahakeechtah*, or The Watchful Elk; and *Mawgah*, or the Goose; the last belongs to the Black-Foot Sioux.

The two Ottos and their wives, who joined us afterwards, were, *Wah-rush-a-menec*, or the Black Deer; and his wife, *Mookapec*, or the Eagle's Plume: *Wah-sho-chegorah*, or The Black Bear; and his wife, *Hou ohpec*, or The Singing Bird.

At Fort Kearney we parted with Colonel Mitchell and his suite, who took the route to Table River. I joined Major Fitzpatrick and the deputies, and we continued on the southern route, which crosses the Indian territory.

The country between the frontiers of Missouri and the Great Blue River presents a remarkable uniformity in all its leading features. Clay soil, rolling prairies, and the shores of the river well wooded. You meet forests of oak and nut-trees of all varieties, with maple and cotton-wood and a variety of trees found in the east. The hill-sides in several places abound in fine springs of water, surrounded by beautiful groves, arranged with as much order and taste as if planted by the hand of man. While a luxuriant turf, enamelled with fragrant flowers, replaces the briars and underwood, the prairies on all sides, surrounded by forests which protect the water-courses, present to the sight an ocean of verdure adorned with flowers, agitated by the wind, and perfuming the air with a thousand odors.

The vale of the Kanzas is broad, of a deep, brown vegetable soil: the same remark may be made of the valleys of the remaining rivers of this territory, all of which are suitable for agriculture. The streams of water are clear; they run over pebbly beds, between high banks, and teem with fine fish.

Major Fitzpatrick preferred taking the southern route, in order to give our friends, the Indian deputies, an opportunity of witnessing the progress that the tribes are capable of making in agriculture and the mechanic arts. He wished to convince them that labor and its results gradually conduct to happiness and ease, and convince them that by adopting habits of industry man is freed from the necessity of wandering from place to place to obtain subsistence.

We reached St. Mary's, among the Potawatomies, on the 11th of October. Bishop Miège, and the other Fathers of the Mission, received us with great cordiality and kindness.

To give the Indian deputies a relish for labor by the tasting of the various products of farming, a quantity of vegeta-

bles and fruits were set before them. Potatoes, carrots, turnips, squashes, parsneps, melons, with apples and peaches, graced the board, and our forest friends did them most ample honor. One of the chiefs, "Eagle Head," said to me, "Now, Father, we comprehend thy words. Thou hast told us that in a few years the buffaloes would disappear from our territory; that we must take measures against the day of need; that then we can reap from the earth subsistence and even plenty for our children. When thou wast speaking to us, our ears were shut; now they are opened, for we have eaten the products of the soil. We see here a happy people, well fed and well clothed. We hope that the great Father (the Bishop) will take pity on us and on our children. We wish to have Black-gowns with us, and we will cheerfully attend to their words."

The day after was Sunday, and all attended High Mass. The church was well filled. The choir, composed of half-bloods and Indians, sung admirably the Gloria, the Credo, and several hymns. The Rev. Father Gailland delivered a sermon in Potawatomie, which lasted three quarters of an hour, and the number of communicants was large. All this, joined with the attention, modesty, and devotion of the whole auditory, some with prayer-books and others with beads, made a profound and, I hope, durable impression on the minds of our Indians of the plains. During several days they never ceased talking with me and questioning on all they had seen, calling it the doctrine that renders men happy here and conducts them to heaven. We found the Mission in a flourishing state; the two schools are well attended; a community of religious of the Sacred Heart have conciliated the affection of the women and girls of the nation, and are working among them with the greatest success. The Potawatomies approach their residences nearer and nearer t.

the church and to their "Good Fathers," and have resolutely commenced cultivating the ground and raising domestic animals. Every Sunday the Fathers have the consolation of contemplating a beautiful congregation of Indians assembled in the wood-built cathedral, and on an average one hundred and twenty piously approaching the Holy Communion. We spent two days visiting the Mission. The Indian chiefs quitted the establishment with hearts overflowing with delight, and in the consoling expectation of having similar happiness in their own tribes at no very distant future. God grant their hopes may be realized!

The weather was fine, and in three days we attained Westport and Kanzas on the Missouri.

On the 16th of October we took places on board the steamboat Clara. Our Indian deputies had never seen a village or settlement of whites except what they had seen at Fort Laramie and at Fort Kearney; they knew nothing of the manner in which houses are constructed, hence they were in constant admiration; and when for the first time they saw a steamboat their wonder was at its height, although they appeared to entertain a certain fear as they stepped on board. A considerable time elapsed before they became accustomed to the noise arising from the escape of steam, and the bustle that took place at the ringing of bells, etc. They called the boat a "*fire-canoe*," and were transported with delight at the sight of another boat ascending with a small boat behind, which they called a "*pappoose*," or little child. When their apprehensions of danger had subsided, their curiosity augmented; they took the liveliest interest in whatever they saw for the first time. They were in grand costume and seated themselves on the promenade deck; as the boat approached the several towns and villages in her progress, they hailed each with shouts and songs.

On the 22d of October we reached St. Louis. A few days after all the members of the Indian deputation were invited to a banquet given in our University. They were highly pleased at the reception given them by the Rev. Father Provincial, and overjoyed at the encouraging hope that he gave them of having Black-gowns among them—a hope perhaps soon to be realized.

Recommending the poor Indian to your prayers, I beg you to believe me with profound respect,

Yours, etc., etc.,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Note.—The word "Medicine" is frequently found in letters written on the religious ideas, practices, and customs of the North American Indians. It is necessary to know the signification that the Indians themselves attach to this word.

The term Wah-kon is employed by the Indians to express any thing that they cannot understand, whether supernatural, natural, or mechanical. A watch, an organ, a steamboat, or any thing in fine, the operations of which exceed their capacity to understand, is called Wah-kon. God is called Wah-kon-tonga, or the Great Incomprehensible. The word *Tonga* in Sioux means great or large.

Wah-kon means, properly, incomprehensible, inexpressible. It is badly translated by the whites, who always render it medicine; thus, for example, the word *Wah-kon-tonga*, or God, has been translated *Great Medicine!*

The word *medicine* has since been so universally applied to the different religious and superstitious ceremonies of the Indians, that all travellers use it when writing of the natives.

The word medicine, when applied to Indian ceremonies, whether religious or superstitious, has, however, no relation to the treatment of the body, but it has been so commonly adopted that I am forced to use t when speaking of the Indians. Thence are derived the compounds, "medicine-feast," "medicine-dance," "medicine-man," etc., and also "*medicine-bag*," or sack, containing idols, charms, and other superstitious articles.

My intention in giving this little note is to distinguish between *medicine* used in the sense of *medicament*, and the same word applied to charms, religious invocations, and ceremonies.

Letter VIII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Shipwreck of the 5th of December, 1853.

University of St. Louis, Jan. 1, 1854.

My dear Brothers:

I profit by my earliest leisure moments, to inform you that we happily arrived at our place of destination on the 27th day of December.

I wish you and your dear children a happy and prosperous New Year, and I implore God to pour down upon you daily his choicest favors and blessings. I can never forget the fraternal attachment and extreme goodness manifested to me so continually during my short visit to the land of my nativity.

I inclose you a little sketch of my long and dangerous voyage. As I am overwhelmed with business, I am forced to write in haste—*currente calamo.*

The 17th of November, the day on which I bade you farewell, will not soon be effaced from my memory. The following day I rejoined Mgr. Miège and his companions, at Paris. The eight young men who accompanied me had only two days to allow them a cursory view of this great city, or interminable fair. They, however, visited its most splendid palaces, and its principal monuments, with the public squares of this extensive and wonderful capital, and the palaces and gardens of Versailles.

On the second we arrived at Havre, so as to be ready to embark thence on the morrow. The whole day was employed in collecting our trunks, boxes, and cases, which were in the different offices of the port, and in making preparations for our voyage. The American steamer was already in the roadstead, about two leagues from the city, and a small towboat was waiting to conduct her passengers to her. I had left my thirteen companions for an hour, to go in search of three boxes at the custom-house, and have them transported directly on board of the Humboldt. On my arrival at the proper place of embarking, all the passengers were there in readiness, except my company. I immediately sent some eight or ten persons in search of them, who searched all the streets and wharves of Havre for six hours, without procuring the least information concerning them. The moment named for sailing arrived! when a *gendarme*, to whom I had addressed myself as a last resource, and the surest, after all, hastened to draw me from my embarrassment by informing me that the young gentlemen that were giving me so much solicitude had been on the Humboldt the last six hours, and that they also were in great anxiety concerning my delay. In a word, they had mistaken their course in the labyrinth of wharves at Havre, and thinking they had not a moment to spare, had hired two little boats to convey them to the steamer. I hastened to join them, and reached the ship at the moment they were heaving the anchor to put to sea.

I found *gendarmes* on board, in search of some suspected individuals. It was said that these agents had received strict orders to examine all the passports carefully. My travelling companions were all provided, except one, who had joined me in Paris, with the consent of his parents. I was not without anxiety in his regard; but our young deserter,

M. M****, disguised as a cabin-boy, played his part perfectly; he held the lantern to aid the police-officers in a manner to do honor to the most skilful cabin-boy, during their whole visit to the saloons and cabins. All the passengers passed in review, all the passports were minutely criticised; but the agents paid no attention to the handsome lantern-bearer, who always remained close by them, and thus quietly escaped their scrutiny. My anxiety, however, did not subside until I saw the gentlemen leave our decks.

Without a moment's delay, two discharges of cannon announce the departure of the Humboldt. Every officer, pilot, and sailor is at his post. The whistling of the steam-engine is heard for the last time, so shrill that it penetrates the very heart of the town: it is the signal of the engineer. The captain with his speaking-trumpet orders the departure, and the steamer steers her course in the direction of Southampton and Cowes—places between the Isle of Wight and the coasts of England, where English passengers and the English mails are received. It was only in the evening of the 23d that she took the direction of New York.

For fourteen days the Humboldt combated against a stormy sea and violent west wind; Neptune received this time a double tribute from those who were so bold as to hazard crossing his domain in this season of the year. The greatest sufferer was Bishop Miège, who kept his bed constantly. The next was young Fortuné Hègel, of Brussels, who has too weak a stomach ever to make a good sailor; he supported this misery with great fortitude, never regretting that he had left his quiet home for some years. All the others escaped tolerably; as to myself, I felt almost no inconvenience from sea-sickness during the whole voyage. To the violent storms of wind we must add several other disagreeable circumstances: the steam-engine got out of order several times, and the

boilers threatened to blow us in the air; the coal was of a bad quality, and that, even, began to become scarce on the twelfth day of our voyage. We were obliged to deviate from our ordinary route, to get a supply of coal at Halifax, a seaport of Nova Scotia. This neglect on the part of the company was extremely fatal in its consequences.

In the forenoon of the 6th of December, about five leagues from port, a fisherman presented himself on board as a pilot, and declared to the captain, who demanded his certificates, "that his papers were either in his boat, or at his own house." The captain relied upon his word, and intrusted him with the management of the ship. Against the expressed opinion of the officers, the false pilot changed the boat's direction, and notwithstanding their reiterated remonstrances, he persisted in his obstinacy. An hour and a half afterwards, the Humboldt struck on the dangerous rocks called "The Sisters," in the neighborhood of Devil's Island. It was half-past six in the morning—the greater number of the passengers were still in their berths. The shock was terrific; I was walking on the deck at the moment. Discovering directly great pieces of wood floating on the surface of the water, I hastened to warn all my companions of their danger, for they were also still in their beds. Young Hègel having been intrusted to me by his father, I took him by my side as long as the danger lasted, and kept a rope in my hand for the purpose of lowering him into the first life-boat that should be launched. All had been startled from sleep. Fear had palsied every heart; and while the water was pouring into the vessel by torrents, fire broke out. It was got under but by great exertion, through the presence of mind and manly energy of the first engineer; after great efforts, they succeeded in extinguishing it. As if all things conspired to our destruction, a fog arose, so thick that we could not see thirty paces

from the vessel. The whole power of the steam-engine was exerted in an attempt to gain the shore, six miles distant. The boat soon inclined to the larboard side, where she had sprung a leak, and began to go down. Every arm set to work to aid in launching the small-boats. Had not the captain exhibited great presence of mind and an extraordinary firmness, there would have been much tumult and disorder. There was a rush to get in first, but happily we were not obliged to resort to this means of saving ourselves. While the greater number believed that all was lost, and I among the rest, the ship touched again, in a few fathoms of water, and rested on a rock. We were saved!

Immediately after the shipwreck, the fog rose, and we then discovered, for the first time and to our joyful surprise, that the shore was only one hundred feet from us. The sea was calm, the wind lowered, and the sun rose majestically. It was the announcement of a return of fine weather, which left us at Havre de Grace, and now accompanied us until we reached Missouri. We had the good fortune and the time to save all our trunks, travelling bags, and boxes. The loss of the ship and cargo was estimated at $600,000.

We had for travelling companions on the Humboldt, Jews, Infidels, and Protestants of every shade. Some of the voyagers were imbued with very strong prejudices against the Catholic faith, but in particular against Jesuits. The wreck of the Humboldt was even attributed to our presence, and it was maliciously proposed to oblige us to quit as soon as possible.

A few hours after the wreck, a steamboat from Halifax came to our aid. The Archbishop of that city treated us with great kindness, and insisted that Mgr. Miège and myself should become his guests during our stay. The next morning we had the consolation of offering the sacrifice of mass

in the cathedral, and my companions all received Holy Communion, to thank the Almighty and our Lady for having saved us amid so many perils, and especially shipwreck, where our life was in danger. Such circumstances are well suited to convince us that we are in the hands of the Lord, who protects us and preserves our life, or calls us, as he wills, before his tribunal.

Halifax numbers about 25,000 souls, one third of whom are Catholics, and contains three Catholic churches, two convents, and four schools.

On the 8th of December, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, after the celebration of mass, we heard that the steamship Niagara, of the Liverpool and Boston line, was in sight. At each trip she stops at Halifax, remaining two hours. All the passengers of the Humboldt, including those that we took in from England, went on board, making the total of passengers more than four hundred.

Among those already on the Niagara, was a little man, with an ape-like face and a goatish beard, who called himself Francis Tapon, a self-nominated apostle, and self-commissioned to teach a new religion to the universe. Francis declared himself an enemy of all existing creeds, but above all to the Pope and the Jesuits. When quitting Liverpool, he declared openly and aloud that he would *kill* the *first Jesuit* that he might meet on American soil! In fact, he was so violent that the captain prudently took from him his gun, pistols, and poniards. The moment I set foot on the Niagara, I was informed of these interesting particulars. I advised my young friends to avoid Mr. Francis Tapon, and pay no sort of attention to his words or movements. He proclaimed from the deck the programme of his new gospel, that "was to succeed all religions." Those who heard him shrugged their shoulders, saying, "The man is crazy." On

arriving at Boston, he made several ablutions, to the great amusement of the passengers, saying that he "*was washing off the last filth of Europe.*" Mr. Tapon at last reached the city, and we lost sight of him, without receiving a blow.

He is but a fanatic more for these States, which have already unfortunately received thousands from all the various countries of Europe. These creatures begin to agitate, to harangue, to seek to change the Constitution, and make the United States a land of proscription, especially against the Catholics.

But let us resume our journey of voyage. We had fine weather, and a pleasant trip from Halifax to Boston, which we reached at night. Our Fathers received us with open arms and extraordinary charity, in which all their parishioners joined,—I will add to the praise of the German congregation in particular, that during our stay at Boston they loaded our tables with poultry, choice vegetables, cakes, and fruits. This parish numbers about 3000 Catholics, and they are distinguished in the city by their piety and zeal. Although Boston contains a Catholic population of nearly 75,000 souls, there are but fifteen priests, and only four or five Catholic schools. The Sisters of Notre Dame, from Namur, have a very flourishing establishment here, and are doing immense good. Their houses in America are very successful, and their subjects are asked for in many of our large towns. In Cincinnati these good sisters teach 2000 children and youth.

I accompanied young Hègle as far as St. John's College, at Fordham, according to the wishes of his father, who had intrusted him to my care for this purpose. We are always astonished at the rapid increase of New York, the great metropolis of the United States, in commerce and population. Its inhabitants, who number more than 700,000, are the

descendants or representatives of every nation beneath the sun. The Catholics number about 200,000.

I returned to Boston on the 14th. The day following, my companions (who were quite recovered from their fatigue) and myself quitted this city. Their astonishment was unceasing at all they saw in Boston, which is styled the *Athens of America.* Its commerce is very great, and its population exceeds 150,000.

We risked ourselves on the railroad, by Buffalo, Cleveland, and Columbus, as far as Cincinnati—a distance of seven hundred and seventy miles—and passed over it in fifty-two hours, comprehending all the delays experienced at the numerous stations. We changed cars six times in this distance. Be not astonished at the word "*risk*," for accidents on all the routes are of frequent occurrence, and often frightful. To-day, it may be that a bridge has been left open—a hair-brained or intoxicated engineer pays no attention, and locomotive and cars are precipitated into the water; to-morrow two trains will meet in collision, dashing into each other with all the velocity that steam can create. In a word, there are all kinds of accidents. When they occur, a list is given of the killed and disabled, which is often a very considerable one, curious inquiries are made, and some days after there is no further mention of the affair.

At Cincinnati our Fathers were most delighted to see us arriving with thirteen new and youthful companions, full of fervent zeal to labor in this vast vineyard of the Lord. As we approached St. Louis, I breathed more freely; I was no longer harassed with anxiety—indeed I had but one step to take, and I should be *at home.* However, this "*step*" measured seven hundred miles, five hundred and thirty of which were to be passed on the Ohio, and one hundred and seventy on the Mississippi, and these rivers give an annual list of

fearful accidents. We entered the steamer on the Ohio, and on the morning of the 21st found ourselves cordially welcomed by our Fathers of Louisville, Kentucky. Continuing our descent on the 22d, we arrived at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi without accident.

My young companions were never weary of admiring the graceful and varied scenery of the lovely Ohio, now gratifying the sight by a chain of romantic elevations, then by a succession of rich lowlands, adorned with well-cultivated and extensive farms; and the attention arrested also by a succession of flourishing villages and cities.

The Mississippi is also more dangerous than the Ohio; exacting from its navigators during the winter many precautions, for the river is then low, full of sand-banks, sawyers, and floating ice. We were several times in danger, and three different times our boat ran aground, and we believed her lost. On our way we saw the wrecks of five boats. Five Lazarists, who shared our disasters in the Humboldt, arrived in St. Louis some days before us, but only after having undergone a second shipwreck, and having been immersed in water to the neck.

On the 26th we reached St. Louis in safety, and animated with joyful and grateful sentiments on finding ourselves at our destination. An hour after my arrival I had the comfort of celebrating mass, in thanksgiving for the special protection and blessings extended to us in our journey from Ghent to St. Louis.

Believe me, dear brothers,

Your devoted brother,

P. J. De Smet.

Letter IX.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

The Crazy Bear, an Assiniboin Chief.

Cincinnati, College of St. Xavier, July 28, 1854.

Rev. and Dear Father:

Vocations, alas! are still extremely rare; we must have ecclesiastics from Europe to go to the aid of the benighted Indians, who are without guide or pastor, and always desirous and anxious for them. I annually receive letters and most pressing invitations from the chiefs of the Indian tribes on the Upper Missouri and among the Rocky Mountains.

The following is a faithful translation of a letter I received from a great chief of the Assiniboins. They occupy the plains of the Yellowstone and of the Missouri: they number about 1500 lodges, and speak the Sioux language. My correspondent and petitioner is the great chief, "the Bear." He was one of the deputation of chiefs who accompanied me to the Great Council in 1851.

"*To the Medicine-man of the White Nation.*

"Black-gown, Father, and Friend:

"I was so happy as to become acquainted with you at Fort Union, in the summer of 1851; but I was then ignorant, in a great degree, of the motives of your visit among

us, and hence I could not discover to you my inmost feelings and explain to you my thoughts. At Fort Union you preached to us—telling us of the Great Spirit and his law. You said you would like to come and teach us, so as to ameliorate the mental and moral condition of our tribes. I think, also, that you gave us reason to expect, that after two or three winters some Black-gowns would come and establish themselves among us, in order to show us how to live well, and how to train up our children. Afterwards we travelled together as far as the Platte. During that journey, and since my return from Fort Laramie, I have learned and heard much of the beautiful Word of the Great Spirit, which you first made known to us. Now, I am persuaded that this Word would change our state and render us happy. At the Great Council, our great Father (Colonel Mitchell, superintendent of Indian Territory) told us that some Black-gowns would come and live among us in the course of four or five years. Black-gown, five years are long to wait! In this long interval I and many of my children may have entered the land of spirits. Take pity on us! The Black-gowns ought not to delay their coming so long. I am growing old: before I die I should like to begin the work, and then I could depart satisfied. My country is tranquil, we are at peace with all the surrounding tribes—our ancient enemies, the Black-Feet, are the only ones we have to fear; but we can protect you. All my nation call aloud for the Black-gown, and invite him to come with all speed: I sincerely hope that our expectation may not be deceived. We know that the Black-gowns devote themselves to the happiness and well-being of the Indians. If to hasten the project pecuniary aid be wanting, I will cheerfully give a portion of the annuities of my tribe to meet this deficiency.

"I see the buffaloes decrease every year. What will be-

come of us without help? If our children are not instructed in time, they will disappear like the game.

"I have learned that the 'Long Knives' (the Americans) have bought the lands of the Chippeways, Sioux, and Winnebagoes, as far as the Red River, and of the Pawnees, Omahas, and Ottos, on the Missouri. The whites are approaching us on the north and on the west, which is a new motive for hastening the arrival of the Black-gown among us.

"I hope my words will reach you, and that you will think of us and our destitute situation. Do this, Black-gown, at the request of your friend,

"The Bear, *Chief of the Assiniboins.*"

Remember me to Father Provincial and the Fathers of St. Michael's. In union with your holy sacrifices, I have the honor to be,

Rev. and dear Father,

Your devoted brother in Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

P. S.—At this time thousands of whites are settling in the Indian Territory from the Kansas to the Running Water, and two large territories have been erected by Congress, called Kansas and Nebraska. It is not yet known what arrangements will be taken for the protection of the different aboriginal nations that are found in them; it is much feared that they will be exiled further into the western wilds. You can see what I said in my second letter, in January, 1852.

The sect of Mormons is making extraordinary progress in the United States. I will endeavor to send you some new and original details on them, which I am actually preparing.

The agitation and prejudices against our holy religion are

so great here just now, that Catholic papers from Europe can scarcely reach us. We are on the eve of great difficulties. The anti-Catholic spirit increases daily. All the enemies of our holy religion are leagued against her. As in all persecutions, they seek to excite the masses by atrocious lies and calumnies. Within the last few days three Catholic churches have been destroyed, and every paper speaks of some new exhibition in some part or other. European demagogues labor with all their might to establish on the American soil their maxims of intolerance and persecution. Of all tyrants, they are the most terrible and fearful.

Letter X.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Religious Opinions of the Assiniboins.

Cincinnati, College of St. Xavier, July 28, 1854.

Rev. and Dear Father:

In my last letter, dated the 16th of this month, when sending you the translation of the address of the Bear, the great Assiniboin chief, I promised you a sketch of the religious and superstitious opinions of that nation. I will now fulfil my promise.

I here propose acquainting you with the religious worship and moral code of the Assiniboins: it may be considered as the type of the superstitious creed of the greater portion of the barbarous tribes which roam over the forests and prairies of the Upper Missouri.

Shrouded in idolatrous darkness, these people have no clear idea of their origin or end. Upon the momentous questions, "Whence came I?" and "What is my future destiny?" there are various conjectures, even among those nations who have received even a feeble light concerning the eternal verities of the Gospel. All the Indians admit the existence of the Great Spirit, viz., of a Supreme Being who governs all the important affairs of life, and who manifests his action in the most ordinary events. They have no correct notion of the immutability of God. They think they can obtain his favors in the accomplishment of their projects,

whatever be their nature, by presents, corporeal macerations, penances, fasts, &c. Thus every spring, at the first peal of thunder, which they call the *voice of the Great Spirit, speaking from the clouds*, the Assiniboins offer it sacrifices;—some burn tobacco, and present to the Great Spirit the most exquisite pieces of buffalo-meat, by casting them into the fire; while others make deep incisions in the fleshy parts of their bodies, and even cut off the first joints of their fingers, to offer them in sacrifice. Thunder, next to the sun, is their Great Wah-kon.* They hear it, and after a storm they sometimes perceive the effects of the lightning on the trees, on their horses, and on man; hence it is an object of dread, and they endeavor to appease it.

It is rare that, during the course of a year, a family is not visited by some calamity;—disease; death, either natural or at the hands of their foes; the loss of their horses, their richest treasure, by robbery; in fine, the scarcity of game, which condemns them to rigorous fasts, and sometimes even to famine. At the least misfortune the father of a family presents the calumet to the Great Spirit, and, in prayer, implores him to take pity on him, his wives, and children. He promises to give him a part of all he possesses, at the first peal of thunder in the spring. When it is practicable, the various camps collect, as soon as winter is over, to offer their gifts and sacrifices in union. This is the religious ceremony *par excellence*. The Assiniboins attach the highest importance to it. They often speak of it in the course of the year, and look forward to its immediate arrival with joy, respect, and veneration. Sometimes three or four hundred lodges of families assemble in one locality. One sole individual is named the high-priest, and directs all the ceremonies of the

* Incomprehensible. See note, p. 120.

festival. A species of hall is constructed, with about thirty lodges, of skins of the buffalo. Each lodge is composed of twenty or twenty-four skins, stretched over a number of posts, seven or eight feet high. On the top of these posts several hundred perches are fastened, and on these each family hangs the articles that it intends to offer in sacrifice. These consist of skins of animals, richly embroidered with porcelain or glass beads, adorned with feathers of every hue; many-colored collars, clothes, and ornaments of all kinds, making a rich and varied "great Indian exhibition." Opposite to this hall they raise a high pole, to which all the chiefs and braves hang their medicine-bags, containing the idols, their arrows, quivers, trophies won from their enemies, especially scalps. This pole is a tree, stripped of its bark, and thirty or forty feet high. Men, women, and children, in a spirit of religion, join in raising and planting it, amid the acclamations of the tribe.

After these preliminaries, the ceremony begins with a harangue and a prayer to the Great Spirit by the high-priest. He implores him to accept their gifts, to take pity on them, protect them against sickness, accidents, and misfortunes of all kinds, and to give them a plenteous hunt, plenty of bison, stag, deer, bighorns, wild-goat, &c., and to aid them in their wars and excursions against their enemies. Then he offers the calumet to the Great Spirit, to the sun, to each of the four cardinal points, to the water, and the land, with words analogous to the benefits which they obtain from each. The sacred calumet is then passed to all the chiefs and warriors, who draw two or three whiffs of smoke, which he puffs out towards heaven, at the same time elevating the pipe. The day finishes with the great "medicine dance," and a variety of dances in honor of the animals which I have named. In these last they try to imitate, as

much as possible, the cries and movements of those animals. Men alone perform this dance.

The second day is devoted to representations; that is, the jugglers, or medicine-men, perform their tricks. Some of these men succeed in imposing on these simple and credulous souls, who discover the supernatural in every thing that they do not understand: this is *great or little Wah-kon*, as it is more or less incomprehensible. Most of these representations are mere feats of legerdemain, which would scarcely excite a smile of mirth or the least astonishment in a circle of civilized persons. During their execution the men and women accompany the jugglers in a kind of chant, which consists of words analogous to the feast, but it is difficult to define what they say, amid their modulations of tone.

The third day is consumed in dances and banquets, in which all can participate. It is highly amusing to witness this spectacle. Among the meats, dogs are particularly numerous—little and big, roasted and boiled, whole or *en appalas*; these form the principal viands of the great religious banquet. Dishes of other meats, with roots, corn, wheat, sugar, &c., are added. All the pots and kettles of the whole tribe, of every form and dimension, are placed over a long row of fires. The braves distribute these meats with admirable order, giving to each one his share. These portions disappear with truly wonderful celerity.

The Assiniboins have two kinds of dances for this feast. Most of them dance some rounds for amusement, and leave the circle when they choose; but a band of young men form the *great religious dance*, and make a vow to the thunder, or voice of the Great Spirit. Then they perform various dances, which last three whole days and nights, with only slight intervals, without their taking the least nourishment or refreshment. I have this from a credible eye-witness.

This extraordinary act is penitential, or rather, propitiatory, to obtain from the Great Spirit success in war. The camp, on this occasion, assumes a new life. All the garments and articles prepared during the winter, from the embroidered leggin and moccasin to the eagle-plumed headpiece, adorn their bodies for the first time, and the whole assembly appears quite brilliant; the camp acquires a new life. Those who are not at the moment occupied in the religious observances, spend their time in games and often very spirited conversation. The feast lasts about ten days. Before separating, each person tears or cuts the article which he sacrificed, so that no one can be tempted to take possession of it. This last act performed, the different companies separate to their own hunting-grounds.

They have some other religious practices and ceremonies, which I observed on my visit, and which are curious enough to be noticed here.

The sun is honored and worshipped by the greater number of the Indian tribes as the author of light and heat. The Assiniboins consider it likewise to be the favorite residence of the Master of Life. They evidence a great respect and veneration for the sun, but rarely address it. On great occasions they offer it their prayers and supplications, but only in a low tone. Whenever they light the calumet, they offer the sun the first whiffs of its smoke.

The Indians regard a solar eclipse as the forerunner of some great disaster; and if a juggler can ascertain from a white man the period of the arrival of an eclipse, he is sure to make use of it to display his Wah-kon, or supernatural knowledge. At the moment of the eclipse the Indians rush out of their lodges, armed in full. They fire their guns, discharge their arrows in the air, and shout and howl, in order to frighten and put to flight the enemy of the Master

of Life. Their pretended success is followed by great rejoicings.

The bear is the terror of all American Indians, for he causes the most serious accidents, and is excessively dangerous, if he be encountered in a thick forest. Every year some savage is killed or crippled in a fight with a bear. They address it prayers and invocations; they offer it sacrifices of tobacco, belts, and other esteemed objects; they celebrate feasts in its honor, to obtain its favors and live without accident. The bear's head is often preserved in the camp during several days, mounted in some suitable position, and adorned with scraps of scarlet cloth, and trimmed with a variety of necklaces, collars, and colored feathers. Then they offer it the calumet, and ask that they may be able to kill all the bears they meet, without accident to themselves, in order to anoint themselves with his fine grease and make a banquet of his tender flesh.

The wolf is also more or less honored among the Indians. Most of the women refuse to dress its skin, at any price. The only reason that I could discover for this freak is, that the wolves sometimes get mad, bite those they meet, and give them the hydrophobia. It is, doubtless, to escape this terrible disease, and to avoid the destruction of their game, that the Indians make it presents and offer it supplications and prayers. In other cases he is little feared. He seldom injures men, but is formidable to the animals, and makes great ravages among them, especially among bison calves, kids, deer, antelopes, hares, &c.

The "little medicine-wolf" is in great veneration among the Assiniboins. He ordinarily approaches the camp during the night. As soon as an Indian hears his barks, he counts the number with care; he remarks whether his voice is feeble or strong, and from what point of the compass it

comes. These observations then become the subject of discussion to the jugglers. What are the prognostics? Why, the "little medicine-wolf" announces to them that on the morrow they may expect a visit from a friend or from an enemy, or perhaps a herd of buffalo. The Indians frequently regulate their movements or marches by these indications; and if, as occasionally happens, they result according to the explanation of the barks, the little wolf is favored with the ceremony of a grand feast!

The belief in ghosts is very profound, and common in all these tribes. Indians have often told me, seriously, that they had met, seen, and conversed with them, and that they may be heard almost every night in the places where the dead are interred. They say they speak in a kind of whistling tone. Sometimes they contract the face like a person in an epileptic fit. Nothing but the hope of gain could ever induce an Indian to go alone in a burying-ground at night. In such a case, love of gain might triumph over the fear of ghosts; but an Indian woman would never be induced, on any condition, to enter one.

The Assiniboins esteem greatly a religious custom of assembling once or twice in the year around the tombs of their immediate relatives. These sepulchres are raised on a species of scaffold, about seven or eight feet above the surface of the soil. The Indians call the dead by their names, and offer them meats carefully dressed, which they place beside them. They take care, however, to consume the best pieces themselves,—after the custom of the priests of the idols of old, who offered their false gods the heart, blood, entrails, and indigestible parts, reserving to themselves the most delicate portions of the victim. The ceremony of burying the dead, among the Indians, is terminated by the tears, wailings, howlings, and macerations of all present. They tear the

hair, gash their legs, and at last the calumet is lighted, for this is the Alpha and Omega of every rite. They offer it to the shades of the departed, and entreat them not to injure the living. During their ceremonious repasts, in their excursions, and even at a great distance from their tombs, they send to the dead puffs of tobacco-smoke and burn little pieces of meat as a sacrifice in their memory.

The religious worship of the Assiniboins embraces a great variety of practices too lengthy to recount—they all bear the same characteristics. I will add, however, one remarkable point. Each savage who considers himself a chief or warrior, possesses what he calls his Wah-kon, in which he appears to place all his confidence. This consists of a stuffed bird, a weasel's skin, or some little bone or the tooth of an animal; sometimes it is a little stone, or a fantastical figure, represented by little beads or by a coarsely painted picture. These charms or talismans accompany them on all their expeditions, for war or hunting—they never lay it aside. In every difficulty or peril they invoke the protection and assistance of their Wah-kon, as though these idols could really preserve them from all misfortunes. If any accident befalls an idol or charm, if it is broken or lost, it is enough to arrest the most intrepid chief or warrior in his expedition, and make him abandon the most important enterprise in which he may be engaged. It is true that they have a conviction that all assistance should come from the Great Spirit; but as they can neither see nor touch him, they invoke him through their favorite tutelary idols. If it happen (though the case is very rare) that an individual should profess not to believe in any kind of Wah-kon, he is regarded among the Indians very much as an infidel or an atheist would be in a Catholic country. They point at him and avoid him. In regard to the future state, they believe that the souls of

the dead migrate towards the South, where the climate is mild, the game abundant, and the rivers well stocked with fish. Their hell is the reverse of this picture; its unfortunate inmates dwell in perpetual snow and ice, and in the complete deprivation of all things. There are, however, many among them who think death is the cessation of life and action, and that there is naught beyond it. As they feel uncertain which is true, they seem to attach no great importance to either. They seldom speak of it; they manifest their views to those whites who inquire of them, and in whom they feel confidence.

The moral principles of the Assiniboins are few in number. Their opinions concerning good and evil have little precision. The social position is respected among them to a certain degree. Fear, on almost every occasion, governs and determines the conduct of the Indian. If he has any ground to suspect that another intends to take his life, he seizes the earliest opportunity of killing that person, provided he can do so without endangering his own life. This case is not looked upon as murder, but as a justifiable self-defence. The crime of murder, properly so called, is not known among them. They never kill, except in quarrels, to avenge or to defend themselves, and custom with them justifies the act. To behave otherwise, according to their received views, would be regarded as an act of folly.

Theft, among the Assiniboins, is only considered disgraceful when it is discovered; then shame and infamy are attached rather to the awkwardness of the thief, for having taken his measures so ill. The old women are acknowledged the most adroit thieves in the country; nevertheless, it is only just to add that the men seldom omit stealing any object, if it can prove useful to them.

Adultery is punished with death in almost every case.

The seducer seldom escapes, if the husband and his family have the power and the courage to execute this law. Hence this crime is rather uncommon. The woman is sometimes killed, but always severely punished. The husband causes her head to be closely shaved, and her person painted over with a heavy coat of vermilion mixed with bear's grease; she is then mounted on a horse, the mane and tail of which have been cut off, and the whole body also daubed with vermilion; an old man conducts her all around the camp and proclaims aloud her infidelity; at last he commits her to the hands of her own relatives, who receive the culprit with a good beating. A woman cannot be subjected to a more degrading punishment.

An Assiniboin has no scruple in *lying*, when he can obtain any advantage from it: he rarely tells falsehoods in jest. In regard to theft, falsehood, and adultery, the Assiniboins differ from the Indians near the Rocky Mountains, especially the Flat-Heads and the Pends d'oreilles, who detest these vices. It may be observed that the Assiniboins have been in relations with the whites during a succession of years.

False oaths are very rare among the Indians, when their promises are assumed with any solemnity. The objects by which the Assiniboin swears are his gun, the skin of the rattlesnake, a bear's claw, and the Wah-kon that the Indian interrogates. These various articles are placed before him, and he says, "In case my declaration prove false, may my gun fire and kill me, may the serpent bite me, may the bears tear and devour my flesh, may my Wah-kon overwhelm me with misery." A circumstance in which perjury could save his life, is the only one in which a savage would be tempted to commit it. In extraordinary and very important affairs, which demand formal promises, they call upon the thunder to witness their resolution of accomplishing the articles pro-

posed and accepted. The whole vocabulary of the Assiniboin and Sioux language contains but one single word which can be considered insulting or as blasphemous. This word expresses the wish that the person or thing in question may become ugly, as we would say in French "Le Monstre," or in Flemish "Gy leelyke beest." The name of the Great Spirit is never pronounced in vain, but always with highest marks of veneration. In this respect the language of the poor Indian is more noble than the more polished tongues of many civilized nations, where there is ever on the swearer's lips curses and blasphemies, and where men mingle in all their conversation the name of the Almighty! Such an individual would not only excite horror in the Indian, but would even excite his terror.

The Sioux, or Dacotahs, of whom the Assiniboins are a branch, pretend that thunder is an enormous bird, and that the muffled sound of the distant thunder is caused by a countless number of young birds! The great bird, they say, gives the first sound, and the young ones repeat it: this is the cause of the reverberations. The Sioux declare that the young thunderers do all the mischief, like giddy youth, who will not listen to good advice; but the old thunderer, or big bird, is wise and excellent, he never kills or injures any one!

The Assiniboins dread vampires and bats. Should these fly near a man, it is an omen of evil. The Will-with-a-wisp is also a great terror to them. The man who sees one during the night, is certain that death is about to carry away some cherished member of his family.

They believe in dreams. According to them, good dreams come from a spirit that loves them, and desires to give them good advice; bad dreams, in particular the night-mare, render them sad and melancholy, and lead them to dread the arrival of painful events.

Not a day passes in an Indian family without some one having seen or heard something that augurs evil. This always excites an anxiety: hence their superstitions become a kind of torment.

I have the honor to be, very dear Father,

Your devoted Serv't and Bro. in Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

P. S.—I hope to send you, in a few days, some account of Indian hunts, and especially of a great bison-hunt made by the Assiniboins in a kind of inclosure or park. If possible, I will add a sketch, to enable you to understand what I try to describe.

The thermometer stands here at 96°, and even 102°. I am afraid my style shows it. The heat is so excessive that several persons have fallen dead in the streets.

I hope you have received my itinerary, my letter on our shipwreck on the Humboldt, and the address sent me by the Bear, the Assiniboin chief. Please acknowledge receipt of all my letters.

Letter XI.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Indian Hunts.

Cincinnati, College of St. Xavier, August 3, 1854.

Rev. and very Dear Father:

According to promise, I proceed to offer you the description of a hunt. If I succeed in making my narration intelligible, I shall be satisfied, and shall not regret devoting my time to the writing of it.

To be a good hunter and a good warrior are the two qualities *par excellence* that constitute a great man among all the nomadic tribes of North America. In this communication I shall limit myself to the manner of conducting a hunt.

The chase absorbs the whole attention of the savage. The knowledge that he has acquired, by long experience, of the nature and instinct of animals, is truly marvellous. He is occupied with it from his tender infancy. As soon as a child is capable of managing a little bow, it is the first instrument his father puts into his hands, to teach him how to hunt little birds and small animals. The young Indians are initiated in all their stratagems. They are taught with as much care how to approach and kill the animals, as in civilized society a youth is instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

An expert Indian hunter is acquainted minutely with the habits and instincts of all the quadrupeds which form the object of the chase. He knows their favorite haunts. It is essential for him to distinguish what kind of food an animal

first seeks, and the most favorable moment of quitting his lair for procuring nourishment. The hunter must be familiar with all the precautions that are necessary to elude the attentive ear and watchful instincts of his intended victims; he must appreciate the footstep that has passed him, the time that has elapsed since it passed, and the direction it has pursued. The atmosphere, the winds, rain, snow, ice, forests, and the water, are the books which the Indian reads, consults, and examines, on leaving his cabin in pursuit of game.

The tribes of the desert find their subsistence in the chase; the flesh of animals affords them food, and the skins clothing. Before the arrival of the whites, the method of killing the different species of animals was very simple, consisting ordinarily of stratagems and snares. They still have recourse to the primitive method in the hunt for large animals, when they have no horses capable of pursuing them, and powder and ball for killing them are wanting.

The trap prepared for the bison is an inclosure or pen, and is one of the more early ways, and perhaps the most remarkable in its execution; it demands skill, and gives a high idea of the sagacity, activity, and boldness of the Indian. As on all other occasions of moment, the jugglers are consulted, and the hunt is preceded by a great variety of superstitious practices. I witnessed one of these hunts at the base of the Rocky Mountains, and of this I will endeavor to give you a faithful detail.

The bisons roam the prairies in herds of several hundreds, and often of several thousands. On many of my travels I have seen with my own eyes, as far as I could discern on these immense plains, thousands and thousands of these noble animals moving slowly, like an interminable troop, in one direction, and browsing the grass as they progress.

They have a fearful appearance; their hairy heads inspire with terror those who are ignorant of the pacific habits of this noble quadruped. Indeed, such is their timidity that one man can put to flight the most numerous herd. When alarmed, the tramp of their hoofs, their bellowings, and the columns of dust which they raise, resemble the deep murmurs of a tempest mingled with peals of thunder, lessening as they grow more remote. The flesh of the bison is much esteemed and very nourishing; it is deemed the daily bread of all the Indian tribes on the great plains.

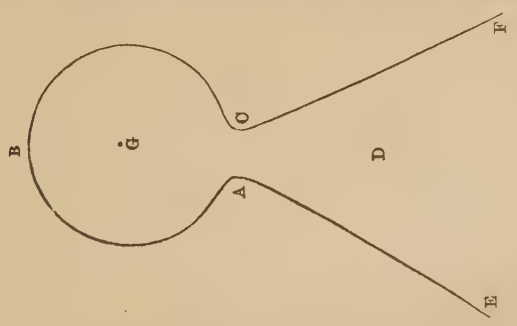
A tribe that has few guns, few horses to run down the animals, which needs provisions, and skins for clothing (and such was the condition of our Assiniboins), must employ the old or primitive method of hunting, which has existed from time immemorial.

The Indians whom I saw engaged in it were encamped on a suitable place for the construction of a park or inclosure The camp of which I speak contained about three hundred lodges, which represents 2000 or 3000 souls. They had selected the base of a chain of hills, whose gentle slope presented a narrow valley and a prairie, in which all the lodges were ranged. Opposite the hills there was a fine large prairie.

After the construction of the lodges, a great council is held, at which all the chiefs and all the hunters assist. They first choose a band of warriors to hinder the hunters from leaving the camp, either alone or in detached companies, lest the bisons be disturbed, and thus be driven away from the encampment. The law against this is extremely severe; not only all the Indians of the camp must conform to it, but it reaches to all travellers, even when they are ignorant of the encampment or do not know that there is a hunt in contemplation. Should they frighten the animals, they are also punishable; however, those of the camp are more rig-

orously chastised in case they transgress the regulation. Their guns, their bows and arrows, are broken, their lodges cut in pieces, their dogs killed, all their provisions and their hides are taken from them. If they are bold enough to resist the penalty, they are beaten with bows, sticks, and clubs, and this torment frequently terminates in the death of the unhappy aggressor. Any one who should set fire to the prairie by accident or imprudence, or in any way frighten off the herd, would be sure to be well beaten.

As soon as the law is promulgated, the construction of the pen is commenced.* Everybody labors at it with cheerful ardor, for it is an affair of common interest, on which the subsistence of the entire tribe during several months will depend. The pen has an area of about an acre. To inclose it in a circular form, stakes are firmly fixed in the ground, and the distance between them filled with logs, dry boughs, masses of stone—in short, with whatever they can find that will answer the purpose. The circular palisade has but one opening; before this opening is a slope embracing fifteen or twenty feet between the hills: this inclined plane grows



* Plan of the Pen.—A B C, Pen; A C, Opening; D, Slope; A E and C F, Hills and Fences; G, Medicine-mast.

wider as it diverges from the circle; at its two sides they continue the fence to a long distance on the plain.

As soon as these preparations are completed, the Indians elect a grand-master of ceremonies and of the pen. He is generally an old man, a distinguished personage, belonging to Wah-kon, or medicine-band, and famous in the art of jugglery, which the Indians, as I have remarked, deem a supernatural science. His office it is to decide the moment for driving the bisons into the inclosure, and give the signal for the commencement of the hunt. He plants the medicine-mast in the centre of the park, and attaches to it the three charms which are to allure the animals in that direction, viz., a streamer of scarlet cloth two or three yards long, a piece of tobacco, and a bison's horn. Every morning at the early dawn he beats his drum, intones his hymns of conjuration, consults his own Wah-kon, and the manitous or guiding-spirits of the bisons, in order to discover the favorable moment for the chase.

The grand-master has four runners at his disposal, who go out daily and report to him the true result of their observations; they tell at what distance from the camp the animals are, their probable number, and in what direction the herd is marching. These runners frequently go forty or fifty miles in different directions. In all their courses they take with them a Wah-kon ball, which is intrusted to them by the grand master: it is made of hair and covered with skin. When the runners think that the suitable moment has arrived, they immediately dispatch a man of their number to the grand-master, with the ball and the good news. So long as the mysterious ball is absent, the master of ceremonies cannot take food; he prolongs this rigorous fast by abstaining from every meat or dish that does not come from some animal killed on the area of the park, until the hunt is

over; and as they often remain a month or more awaiting the most favorable moment of beginning, the grand-master must find himself reduced to very small rations, unless he makes some arrangement with his conscience. It is probable that he eats stealthily at night, for he has no more appearance of fasting than his brethren of the camp.

Let us now suppose all to be in readiness, and the circumstances all favorable to the hunt. The grand-master of the park beats his drum, to announce that the bisons are in numerous herds at about fifteen or twenty miles distance. The wind is favorable, and comes directly from the point in which the animals are. Immediately all the horsemen mount their coursers; the foot-soldiers, armed with bows, guns, and lances, take their positions, forming two long oblique diverging rows, from the extremity of the two barriers which spring from the entrance of the pen and extend into the plain, and thus prolong the lines of the inclosure. When the footmen are placed at distances of ten or fifteen feet, the horsemen continue the same lines, which separate in proportion as they extend, so that the last hunter on horseback is found at about two or three miles distance from the pen, and at very nearly the same distance from the last hunter of the other line, in an opposite direction. When men are wanting, women and even children occupy stations.

After the formation of these two immense lines, one single Indian, unarmed, is sent upon the best courser in the camp in the direction of the buffaloes, to meet them. He approaches, against the wind, and with the greatest precaution. At the distance of about one hundred paces he envelops himself in a buffalo-hide, the fur turned outside, and also envelops his horse as much as possible in the same manner, and then makes a plaintive cry in imitation of that of a bison calf. As if by enchantment, this cry attracts the at-

tention of the whole herd; after some seconds, several thousands of these quadrupeds, hearing this pitiful plaint, turn towards the pretended calf. At first they move slowly, then advance into a trot, and at last they push forward in full gallop. The horseman continually repeats the cry of the calf, and takes his course towards the pen, ever attentive to keep at the same distance from the animals that are following him. By this stratagem he leads the vast herd of bisons through the whole distance that separates him from his companions, who are on the *qui vive*, full of ardor and impatience to share with him in his sport.

When the buffaloes arrive in the space between the extremities of the two lines, the scene changes; all assumes an appearance of eagerness. The hunters on horseback, giving rein to their steeds, rejoin each other behind the animals. At once the scent of the hunters is communicated among the frightened and routed animals, which attempt to escape in every direction. Then those on foot appear. The bisons, finding themselves surrounded and inclosed on all sides, except the single opening into the circular pen before them, low and bellow in the most frightful manner, and plunge into it with the speed of fear and desperation. The lines of hunters close in gradually; and space becomes less necessary as the mass of bisons and the groups of hunters become more and more compact. Then the Indians commence firing their guns, drawing their arrows, and flinging their lances. Many animals fall under the blows before gaining the pen: the greater number, however, enter. They discover, only too late, the snare that has been laid for them. Those in front try to return, but the terrified crowd that follow forces them to go forward, and they cast themselves in confusion into the inclosure, amid the hurrahs and joyful shouts of the whole tribe, intermingled with the firing of guns.

As soon as all are penned, the buffaloes are killed with arrows, lances, and knives. Men, women, and children, in an excitement of joy, take part in the general butchery, and the flaying and cutting up of the animals. To look at them without disgust in this operation, one must have been a little habituated to their customs and manners. While men cut and slash the flesh, the women, and children in particular, devour the meat still warm with life—the livers, kidneys, brains, &c., seem irresistible attractions: they smear their faces, hair, arms, and legs with the blood of the bisons; confused cries, clamorous shouts, and here and there quarrels, fill up the scene. It is a picturesque and savage scene, a very pandemonium—a sight very difficult to depict by words or to recount in minute details. In the hunt which I have just described, and at which I was present, six hundred bison were taken.

After the butchery, the skins and the flesh are separated into piles, and these piles are divided among the families, in proportion to the number of which they are composed. The meat is afterwards cut in slices and dried; the bones are bruised and their grease extracted. The dogs also receive their portion of the feast, and devour the remains on the arena of the pen. Two days after the hunt not a vestige of the carnage remained. Before separating, the Indians pass several days in dancing and mirth. One of your Keysers or Ver Brœckhovens should assist at one of these spirited, picturesque scenes of the Great Desert; he would find a new subject for a painting.

The old proverb says, "One half of the world knows not how the other half lives." The American Indians, who live on the spontaneous products of the soil may say as much: the countless herds of bison that roam over the vast plains, serve as daily bread to the numerous tribes of the Great Desert.

The Soshocos are the most degraded of the races of this vast continent. The Americans call them "*Poor Devils*," and the French and Canadian *voyageurs* denominated them "*les dignes de pitié*." They roam over the desert and barren districts of Utah and California, and that portion of the Rocky Mountains which branches into Oregon. In my missions and journeys I have sometimes met with families of these wretched Soshocos, who are really worthy of pity. I was so happy as to baptize several of their sick children just before they died.

While the Indians of the plains, who live on the flesh of animals, become tall, robust, active, and generally well-clad with skins, the Soshoco, who subsists chiefly on grasshoppers and ants, is miserable, lean, weak, and badly clothed; he inspires sentiments of compassion in the minds of those who traverse the unproductive region which he occupies.

After having described to you the inclosure hunt, as practiced by the Assiniboins, I will show you the reverse of the picture, by describing the great grasshopper hunt practiced among the Soshocos. This hunt deserves mention, I think, especially as a contrast to the other.

The principal portion of the Soshoco territory is covered with wormwood, and other species of artemisia, in which the grasshoppers swarm by myriads; these parts are consequently most frequented by this tribe. When they are sufficiently numerous, they hunt together. They begin by digging a hole, ten or twelve feet in diameter by four or five deep; then, armed with long branches of artemisia, they surround a field of four or five acres, more or less, according to the number of persons who are engaged in it. They stand about twenty feet apart, and their whole work is to beat the ground, so as to frighten up the grasshoppers and make them bound forward. They chase them towards the centre by

degrees—that is, into the hole prepared for their reception. Their number is so considerable that frequently three or four acres furnish grasshoppers sufficient to fill the reservoir or hole.

The Soshocos stay in that place as long as this sort of provision lasts. They, as well as other mortals, have their tastes. Some eat the grasshoppers in soup, or boiled; others crush them, and make a kind of paste from them, which they dry in the sun or before the fire: others eat them *en appalas*—that is, they take pointed rods and string the largest ones on them; afterwards these rods are fixed in the ground before the fire, and, as they become roasted, the poor Soshocos regale themselves until the whole are devoured.

As they rove from place to place, they sometimes meet with a few rabbits, and take some grouse, but seldom kill deer or other large animals.

The contrast between the Indian of the plain and the destitute Soshoco, is very striking; but poor as he is, like the Hottentot, he loves devotedly his native soil.

I shall soon leave Cincinnati for Louisville, in Kentucky, and then for St. Louis; from thence, in order to comply with your request, I shall continue my Indian memoirs. Among other things, I will give you the description of the peace expedition sent by the Crows to the Black-Feet. I collected the facts on the spot, in my mission of 1851; for in the superstitious and religious ideas and practices of the savages, in their expeditions of war and hunting, their character and manners are best described. I will give you these curious details with as much fidelity as I can.

Rev. and dear Father,

Your devoted servant and brother in Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Indian Warfare.

University of St. Louis, August, 1854.

Rev. and Dear Father:

In my last I spoke of the Indian hunting in the Great Desert. I will give you, to-day, some general observations on their wars, and especially what I could learn of an unhappy *peace expedition*, during my last visit to the Crows.

It may be said that war is the *ne plus ultra* of an Indian's glory. The ambition of becoming a great warrior absorbs all his attention, all his talents, all his bravery; it is often the object of all his voluntary sufferings. His prolonged fasts, his long war-paths, penances, and macerations, and his religious observances, have principally this sole end. To wear an eagle's plume, the emblem of an Indian warrior, is in his eyes supreme honor, and the most magnificent of ornaments; for it betokens that he has already distinguished himself in battle. Generally at the age of seventeen or eighteen years, after the first fast, and after having selected his wah-kon, manitou, or tutelary spirit, the youthful savage joins the war-parties, which are composed solely of volunteers.

A chief, or a partisan, who wishes to form a war-party, presents himself in the midst of the camp, tomahawk in hand, and painted with vermilion, the symbol of blood. He intones his war-song: this kind of song is short. The war-

chief proclaims with emphasis his lofty deeds, his patriotic and martial ardor—the sentiments and motives which prompt him to vengeance. His song is accompanied with the drum and the sischiquoin, or gourd filled with little pebbles. He stamps on the ground, as though he could shake the earth to the centre. All the youth listen to him with attention, and any one who rises becomes a volunteer in his party; he, in his turn, intones his war-song, and this ceremony has the force of a solemn pledge, from which a young man cannot honorably withdraw. Each volunteer arms and equips himself with all that will be necessary for him in his expeditions. The whole force of public opinion among the Indians appears to be concentrated on this point. The narration of their adventures and of their valorous deeds, their dances, their religious ceremonies, the speeches of their orators in their public assemblies; whatever, in fine, that can serve to inflame ambition in the mind and heart of a barbarian, is referred to the idea of being one day distinguished in war.

I have now to speak of the Crows. Among all the tribes of the northwest portion of North America, this nation is considered as the most warlike and valiant. It counts about four hundred and eighty lodges, ten individuals to a lodge, and roams over the valley of the Yellowstone, principally in the region of the Wind River Mountains, or Black Hills, and the Rocky Mountains. This race is one of the noblest in the desert; they are tall, robust, and well-formed, have a piercing eye, aquiline nose, and teeth of ivory whiteness. If they are considered as superior in intelligence to all their neighbors, they also surpass them in their wah-kon, or superstitious ideas and ceremonies, which reign in all their movements and actions. In illustration, I will cite the following trait, of which I was innocently and ignorantly the cause.

In 1840, I first met the Crows, in the valley of the Big

Horn, a tributary of the Yellowstone. In my quality of Black-gown, they received me with all possible demonstrations of respect, and with a sincere joy. I had with me a stock of lucifer-matches, which I used from time to time to light my pipe, and the calumet used in the Great Council. The effect of these matches surprised them greatly; they had never seen any. They conversed about them in all the lodges, and called them the mysterious fire which the Black-gown carried. I was at once considered the greatest medicine-man that had ever visited their tribe. They consequently treated me with distinguished respect, and listened to all I said with the greatest attention. Before my departure, the chiefs and principal warriors of the council requested me to leave them a portion of my matches. Unconscious of the superstitious ideas which they attached to them, I readily distributed them, reserving only what was necessary for my journey. In 1844 I visited them again. The reception they gave me was most solemn. I was lodged in the largest and finest lodges of the camp. All the chiefs and warriors were habited in their embroidered moccasins, leggins, and buckskin shirts ornamented with beads and porcupine quills, while eagle's feathers crowned their heads, and they conducted me in grand ceremony from lodge to lodge. That I might participate in a grand banquet, I was provided with my band of eaters, who would do honor to the viands and eat for me. One of the great chiefs testified a special friendship for me. "*It is to thee, Black-gown*," said he to me, "*that I owe all my glory in the victories I have gained over my enemies.*" His language astonished me greatly, and I begged him to explain. Without delay he took from his neck his wah-kon, or medicine-bag, wrapped in a bit of kid. He unrolled it, and displayed to my wondering view the remnant of the matches I had given him in 1840! "I use

them," said he, "every time I go to battle. If the mysterious fire appears at the first rubbing, I dart upon my enemies, sure of obtaining victory." I had considerable difficulty in disabusing their minds of this singular superstition. As you see, it requires little to acquire a reputation among the Indians: with a few lucifer-matches, you may be a great man among the Crows, and receive great honors.

The Crows have been invested during several years, on the north by the Black-Feet, on the east by the Assiniboins and Crees, and on the south by the Sioux. Each of these invading nations being more numerous than the nation invaded, the Crows were necessarily engaged in perpetual war, sometimes with one and sometimes with the other of these tribes. Hence the last ten years show a great diminution in their population, which numbers at the present time not more than four hundred warriors.

Occasionally the Crows have enjoyed peace with the tribes of the Black-Feet, Sioux, Bonacks, Assiniboins, etc.; and it is a quite remarkable fact, that they have never been the first to violate a treaty of peace, except in the following instance, which I will narrate in full.

In 1843, the great chief of the nation was known by the title of *Tezi-Goe*, a word which sounds bad enough, meaning Rotten Belly. He was as much renowned for his bravery in war as for his wisdom in council, and the patriotic love that he testified to the whole nation. Seeing with pain the great losses that the continual incursions of so many enemies caused his tribe, he resolved to conclude a solemn treaty of peace, if not with all, at least with a great part of the Black-Feet. He made all suitable arrangements, and convoked his council, to deliberate on the most prompt and the most efficacious means of success in his great design. All the warriors hastened to his aid. After having discussed the dif-

ferent points, it was unanimously decided that a party of twenty-five braves should repair to the Black-Feet camp, to offer them the calumet of peace.

The guide chosen to conduct the band was one of the nation of Black-Feet, taken prisoner by the Crows some years before, and hitherto retained in captivity. In order to attach him more securely to the good cause, the Crows granted him his liberty, with the title of brave, and the permission to wear the eagle's plume. He was, besides, loaded with presents, consisting of horses, arms, and ornaments of every kind. Having received his instructions, he set out joyfully and with signs of gratitude, fully resolved to neglect nothing to obtain and consolidate an honorable and lasting peace between the two nations. A place had been designated in which the two tribes might meet as friends and brothers, to celebrate the grand event. The deputation, therefore, set out for the Black-Feet camp of four hundred lodges, commanded by the great chief "Spotted Deer," or Ponukah-kitzi-Pemmy, which they found encamped in the valley of the Maria River, a pretty large branch of the Missouri River, in the neighborhood of the Great Falls.

About a month before the departure of this expedition, two Crows had been killed, near their own camp, and their scalps carried away, by a war-party of Black-Feet. The two brothers of these unfortunate victims fasted, and took their oaths according to custom. These oaths consisted in vowing that they would each kill a Black-Foot, the first good chance. They communicated their intentions to no one. The bravery and determination of these two men were well known. They were elected to join the band of deputies, and promised ostensibly to forget their private wrongs for the public welfare; but in secret they renewed their first intentions, fore-

seeing that this excursion would probably furnish an occasion of avenging the double murder of their brothers.

The band progressed slowly, using many precautions, and redoubling them as they approached the camp of the Black-Feet. When within a few days' distance from it, they separated in companies of two or three, to scour the country and assure themselves whether any Black-Feet parties were out of the village. In the course of the day the two brothers stayed together, and discovered two Black-Feet Indians returning from the chase, with several horses laden with buffalo-meat. Having with them a calumet-handle, they advanced boldly towards their enemies, and offered them the pipe, as on similar occasions. The Black-Feet Indians received the calumet, and were informed that a great deputation, commissioned on the part of the Crows, was repairing to their village, with pacific intentions. They acted with so much address, that, after some moments, the Black-Feet were entirely reassured, and conceived no suspicions nor suffered the least anxiety. One of them presented his gun to one of the two Crows, and the other gave his horse to the second. They took the same way together towards the camp, but their path led through a deep and lonely ravine. There the snare was discovered. The two Black-Feet suddenly received mortal blows, and were thus cowardly assassinated by the two Crows, who scalped their victims. They then killed the horses with arrows, and concealed their carcasses beneath the underwood and briers. The two scalps were carefully secured in their bullet-bags. Having removed all traces of blood from their habiliments, they rejoined their companions, without making known the cruel act of private vengeance they had consummated, secretly and in violation of all received Indian usages. The day which followed this atrocious crime the deputation made a solemn entrance into

the camp of the Black-Feet, and were received by the chiefs and braves with the greatest cordiality, and with every attention of Indian hospitality.

The Black-Feet declared themselves favorable to the treaty of peace. They received joyfully the proposition which the Crows made by their guide and interpreter, the recent prisoner. All the politeness and attention of which Indians are capable were lavished upon the deputies. They were invited to a great number of feasts, to amusements and public sports, which lasted late in the night. They were afterwards distributed to the lodges of the principal chiefs, in order to repose after their fatiguing journey.

The inclination to steal is very common among the women of several tribes of the Northwest. The Black-Feet women share largely in this bad reputation. One of these feminine pilferers, favored by the darkness of night, silently entered the lodges where the Crows were peaceably sleeping. She relieved their pouches of all that could prove valuable to her. While searching, she laid her hand upon a damp, hairy object, and instantly perceived it to be a scalp. She seized it, quitted the camp in the greatest possible silence, and, by the glimmering of the watchfire which was burning in the middle of the camp, examined the bloody trophy. It is very difficult to move an Indian, for he is habituated to strange sights. Such an event would have spread alarm among white men, but it only tended to render the Indians more circumspect and more prudent in taking measures. The woman, after reflecting a moment, turned her steps towards the lodge of the great chief, awoke him, and communicated to his ear in the softest whisper the important discovery she had made. He lighted a pine torch, in order to examine the scalp. At the first glance he recognized it as that of a young hunter who had not yet come back from the chase.

The chief instantly formed his plan. He made signs to the woman to follow him, recommended her to retire to her own lodge, because nothing could be done before daylight, and forbade her to divulge her secret, or to excite the slightest suspicion. He feared that in the confusion which would probably arise, and sheltered by the darkness, some of the Crows might escape.

The Spotted Deer then, alone and noiselessly, made the rounds of his camp. He aroused his bravest warriors, to the number of twenty or thirty, by a single touch, and also those whom he desired to consult in this circumstance. They followed him, asking no questions, and were conducted to a solitary place in the vicinity of the camp. There, forming a circle and lighting a torch, the chief displayed the scalp, and related to them the adventure of the woman.

The youngest of his counsellors desired instant revenge on the Crows, but the prudent chief represented to them that the night was not a favorable time; besides, that having smoked together the calumet of peace, to kill them in their own lodges, and in the very camp of the Black-Feet, would be at variance with all their customs and practices, and would draw upon them the contempt of all other Indian nations. He, however, commanded them to hold themselves armed and ready at daybreak.

The Crows rose early. They were somewhat surprised to see the lodges they occupied surrounded by a band of four or five hundred warriors, armed and mounted on their fleetest coursers, and with countenances far from friendly, as on the previous eve. But Indians are not easily disconcerted; they awaited the result in silence. As soon as the daylight appeared in the camp, the Spotted Deer convened a grand council and summoned the Crow deputies to appear. They at once obeyed, and took their places with the

air of haughty indifference, peculiar to the Indian, in the centre of a circle of enemies who were burning with vengeance. When all were in order, the Spotted Deer arose, and thus addressed the Crows: "Strangers, only yesterday you arrived in our camp. You declared yourselves the deputies of your principal chiefs, sent to conclude with us, hitherto your foes, a solid and durable treaty of peace. We listened to your message. Your words and propositions seemed reasonable and advantageous. All our lodges have been open to you; you have shared in our feasts and hospitality; you joined in our games. Yesterday we had the intention of showing you to-day still greater liberality. But, before discoursing further, I have one single question to ask you, Crows! I must have an answer; and that answer will decide whether peace be possible, or whether a war of destruction must continue." Then drawing the scalp from the bullet-pouch, and displaying it before them, he cried, "Tell me, Crows, whose hair is this? Who among you claims this trophy?" Those of the Crows who were ignorant of the affair, looked on with amazement, and could only imagine that the Black-Feet sought a pretext for quarrelling. No one replied. The chief resumed: "Will no one answer? Must I call a woman to question these Crow braves?" Then beckoning to the stealer of the scalp, he said to her, "Show us to which warrior this trophy belongs." Without hesitation, she pointed to one of the brothers. Every eye was fixed upon him. The chief, Spotted Deer, approaching the murderer, said to him, "Knowest thou this scalp? Didst thou take it? Fearest thou now to avow it?" With one bound the young Crow placed himself opposite the chief, and shouted, "Spotted Deer, I fear not! It is I who took the scalp! If I endeavored to conceal it, I did so with the desire of doing more evil! Thou askest whose hair is this. Look at

the hairy fringe of thy shirt and thy leggins. In my turn, I ask, whose hair is that? Belongs it not to my two brothers, slain by thee or thine, hardly two moons ago? or belongs it not to the relations of some Crow here present? 'Tis vengeance brings me here! My brother holds in his shot-bag the companion of this scalp. We determined, before leaving the camp, to cast into thy face these bloody tufts, at the same moment, as our challenge of defiance."

This language determined the Black-Feet. "Young man, thou hast spoken well," replied the Spotted Deer; "thou art valiant and fearest not death, which will strike thee and thy companions in a few moments. Yet we have smoked the calumet together. It is not suitable that the ground on which that ceremony took place should drink thy blood. See, Crows, the hill before you! It is in the way that leads to your lodges. So far we allow you to go. When you get there, we will pursue you. Go on, and leave us."

The Crows instantly left the place, and advanced towards the hill designated by the Black-Foot chief, determined to sell their lives dearly in this unequal combat. Their enemies mounted their horses, and awaited with ardor the order for the pursuit.

As soon as the Crows reached the hill, the terrific war-whoop—the *Sassaskivi*—resounded through the camp. The Black-Feet, burning to avenge the outrage received, rushed forward with the greatest impetuosity. The Crows, after running some moments, found a deep ravine excavated in the plain by the running waters: judging the position favorable, they took refuge in it, and maintained themselves for some time. As soon as, in their first ardor, the Black-Feet approached the ravine to dislodge them, a general discharge of muskets and arrows from the Crows killed eighty Black-Feet, and wounded a great number. This discharge routed

them, and forced them to draw off. The Black-Feet dismounted, and on foot there were several skirmishes between the two bands; but all were disadvantageous to the Black-Feet, for the Crows were protected in the hole, and only showed their heads through necessity, while their enemies fought in the open plain. A great number of Black-Feet lost their lives in these different attempts, while the Crows lost not a man. Spotted Deer, seeing the danger and the useless destruction of so many warriors, made an appeal to his braves. He proposed to them to place himself at their head, and to fall simultaneously on their enemies. His proposition was accepted; the war-whoop resounded anew through the bloody plain; they attacked the Crows *en masse*, and after having discharged on them their guns and arrows, armed only with their daggers and tomahawks, they darted with confused violence into the ravine, and in a few moments horribly massacred the whole band. In this last attack, it is worth noting that not a single Black-Foot lost his life.

The combat ended, the scalps were carried off by the warriors who had most distinguished themselves in the affair. The women cut the corpses of their slain in such small pieces, that it would be difficult to detect among them the smallest trace of the human form. The scalps, with all the torn scraps of flesh, were then attached as trophies to the extremities of poles and lances, and triumphantly borne through the camp, mid chants of victory, yells of rage, with howling and vociferations against their enemies. There was also a general mourning, caused by the loss of so many warriors fallen in this horrible engagement. Since that day, war continues without relaxation to the present time.

This shocking recital I learned in 1851, on that very battle-field, and from a chief who was in the engagement.

I request you, in a special manner, to pray very particu-

larly for these poor Indians. During fourteen years they have implored the favor of having some of our Fathers sent to them. The scripture, "They asked bread, and there was none to break it to them," may be justly quoted in regard to them. In my short visits to them I have been touched with their affability, their beneficent hospitality, and the respectful attention they gave to my instructions. I augur very favorably of their good dispositions, and am convinced that two or three fervent and zealous missionaries could gather consoling fruits for religion from these barbarians, who sigh to know and practice the Gospel of Peace. Since my last interview with them, in 1851, I have received several letters from them.

Do not forget me in your prayers, and be so good as to remember me to the Fathers and Brothers of St. Michael's College.

I have the honor to be, with the most profound respect and esteem,

Rev. and dear Father,

Your most devoted servant and brother in Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J

Letter XIII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Tchatka.

Reverend Father:

You have received the address of Matau-Witko, or the Bear, the present chief of the Assiniboins. This has shown the favorable dispositions entertained by that chief for our holy religion. I spoke to you of their hunts, of an expedition of peace and war sent by the Crows, or *Absharokays*, to the Black-Feet, or *Ziarzapas*,* their inveterate enemies. I have described the Assiniboin worship, which, in regard to ceremonies, superstitious practices, and various points of belief, resembles all others in use among the different Indian tribes of the Upper Missouri.

These details must have given you an idea of the depth of heathen darkness in which the North American Indians are yet shrouded. How worthy, alas! are they of exciting Christian compassion and devotedness! How noble the

---

* The Black-Feet are one of the most powerful tribes in the new territory of Nebraska. They number about 10,000. Their war and hunting parties go as far north as 52°, and cover all the valley of the Upper Missouri and its tributaries from the Rocky Mountains to 103° north.

I have already given a table of the different tribes of the Upper Missouri, and of the Sioux, as well as some notions on the bands, territories, language, names, names of principal chiefs, and explained the word wah-kon or medicine.

mission of rescuing the minds and hearts of this despised and forlorn race from the degrading superstitions and infamous cruelties to which they are abandoned: of sowing in that uncultivated soil the mustard-seed, which will spring up and bear the immortal blossoms of present and future happiness!

Some of our Fathers are already engaged in this noble task. It is to be hoped that a greater number may be inspired to join them in bearing the torch of faith to all the nations which desire it, and incessantly implore Black-gowns. I speak from actual knowledge when I say that most of the nations of the Great Desert manifest a desire for instruction, and listen willingly to the word of the Lord.

To initiate you still further in the knowledge of Indian manners and customs, I have thought that you would be pleased to receive a sketch of the life of the most renowned chief of the Assiniboins. He was a crafty, cruel, deceitful man, a bad Indian, in every sense of the word; his whole life was full of horrors. For forty years he led his tribe in the forest. At the commencement of his career, his band numbered over 2000. He led them from war to war, sometimes with success, often with reverse. Disease thinned the band—poison and battle wasted them like snow. When they were but a handful, he beheld the remnant of his gallant band disperse, and seek an asylum in a more powerful and numerous camp. He died as he had lived. Either from fear, jealousy, or hatred, he had recourse to poison to rid himself of all who opposed him. Pursued by remorse and despair, he used the same means to put an end to his own days. He died in most terrible convulsions. This story will show you that the Indians, too, have their Neros and Caligulas.

All the accounts that I have read on the statistics of the Indians, show that their numbers constantly decrease. To

what is this remarkable decline to be ascribed? The history of the Assiniboin tribe, led by this wicked chief, is more or less the history of the decline of the other tribes. Ambitious chiefs and partisans keep up incessant wars in their tribes, and unknown diseases thin them. Then comes the acquaintance with the whites; the Indians learn, and easily adopt, the vices and excesses of the pioneers of our civilization. The spirituous liquors, which they offer the Indians in abundance—more terrible than war—sweeps them off by hundreds, and they disappear, leaving behind them only sad mounds, as tombs, which dot the plains and highlands by the river-side, till the plough at last levels these last vestiges of a race.

If time permits, I will hereafter give some details on the actual condition of the Indian tribes under the domination of the great Republic. The government has just organized, in the western desert, two new territories—Kanzas and Nebraska.* They embrace an extent of neither more nor less than between five and six hundred thousand square miles. They will then be divided into several States, and each of these States will be larger than France. Whites are already pouring in in thousands, all hastening to take possession of the best sites. The law has just passed; no steps are yet

* Nebraska Territory extends to 49° north, the northern boundary of the United States; on the south, the line of 40° separates it from Kanzas; its eastern limit is the White River and the Missouri, which separate it from Minnesota and Iowa; on the west, it extends to the Rocky Mountains.

Kansas Territory extends three degrees, or 208 miles, further south; on the east is the State of Missouri; on the north, the 37th degree separates it from the Cherokee Reservation; on the west, it is bounded by the Rocky Mountains.

These two territories contain over 500,000 square miles, or forty times the surface of Belgium.

taken to protect the Indians, and already fifty new towns and villages are in progress; barns, farms, mills, &c., rise on all sides as though by enchantment. I did not then think that the moment of invasion was so near.

The narrative with which I will entertain you to-day is well known in all the region where the scenes occurred. I have it from two most reliable sources—that is to say, from a man of tried probity and veracity, Mr. Denig, of the St. Louis Fur Company, and from a worthy Canadian interpreter. Both resided many years among the Assiniboins, and knew the subject of the story, and witnessed many of his acts.

This hero is Tchatka or Gaucher, an Assiniboin chief. He exercised, during his long career, more power over the band or tribe that he led and governed, than any other savage Nestor whose history I have learned. He had received several names; but that of Gaucher, or Awkward, is that by which he was known among the *voyageurs** and fur-traders. His other names were, Wah-kon-kangta, or the Great Medicine; Mina-Yougha, or the Knifeholder; and Tatokah-nan, or the Kid. These titles were bestowed on him at different periods of his life, in memory of some remarkable deed by which he had distinguished himself, and which will appear in the course of my narrative.

The family of Tchatka was very numerous, and enjoyed great influence. As the members purposed electing him their chief, and conductor of the camp, as soon as he should attain his majority, he attracted the attention of the northern fur-traders of Upper Canada and the Hudson Bay Company's territory. The intimacy which he cultivated with

* I use the word *voyageur*, a Canadian term, adopted in English to designate the white hunters of the West, a peculiar set of men.

the whites, united to a high degree of native cunning, proved the means of his acquiring many arts, which gave him on his return a kind of distinction among his people. He had also obtained, by means of a white man, a quantity of poison, and had learned its properties and use. Tchatka was an unprincipled, deceitful, cunning, cowardly man. Although young and vigorous, he always kept out of danger. While the warriors of his tribe were fighting in the plain, he would be seated on a hill or some other spot from which he could observe all that passed. He had been initiated into all the tricks of the jugglers. He never performed incantation and juggleries without a good horse beside him, on which he sprang in case of defeat. He was always the first to escape, abandoning the combatants to their own luck, and got off as well as he could. As we shall see in the sequel, he became chief of two hundred and eighty lodges, or about twelve hundred warriors. The great confidence which they had in their leader seems to have been the cause of his great success in the war against the Black-Feet and other enemies of the nation.

As soon as Tchatka had attained the requisite age, he used every effort to attain his object and satisfy his ambition. He calculated the advantages and ascendency he would obtain over the people by becoming initiated in the great band of medicine-men or jugglers,* and he pretended to the gift

* The Wah-kons, or Medicine-men, among the American Indians, and the Panomoosi of Northern Asia, belong to the same class. In both hemispheres these charlatans pretend to heal diseases by witchcraft; they predict the issue of wars and hunts. In all cases they pretend to be inspired by Manitous; that is, divinities or spirits. They generally retire to the depth of the forests, where they pretend to fast for several days, and often practice very vigorous penances, consisting especially in corporal macerations; then they beat the drum, dance, sing, smoke, cry, and howl like wild beasts. All these preparatives are accompanied

of prophecy. A second motive for this initiation was, that he might thereby conceal his want of bravery—a quality indispensable in a chief. Many remarkable stories are related of his exactitude in predicting future events, and for which the simple savages could give no explanation.

Tchatka was not ignorant that there were several persons in the tribe whose influence was great, who were older than he, and who had acquired by their valor in war, and by their wisdom in the council, real titles to the dignity of great chief. In order to arrogate to himself the sole government of the camp, he conceived the frightful design of getting rid of his competitors. He brought to the execution of his project all his cunning and deceit. I have already alluded to the poisons in his possession. By secret experiments he became well informed concerning their power and influence. He administered it himself, or by the hands of others, so adroitly that not the least suspicion was excited. His character of prophet came to his aid. He predicted to his victims, often several weeks and months before the event, that they had not long to live, according to the revelations of his Wah-kon, and manitous or spirits. The accomplishment of this species of prediction established his reputation; he obtained the title of "Strong in Jugglery." The poor savages regarded him with fear and respect—as a being who could at his will dispose of life. Many made him presents of

---

by a host of furious actions, and such extraordinary contortions of body, that they would seem possessed. These jugglers are visited secretly by night by accomplices in their craft and hypocrisy, who carry them all the news of the village and its neighbornood. By these means the jugglers, on leaving the forest and returning to the village, easily impose on the credulous. The first part of their predictions consists in giving an exact account of all the events of the village since their departure—marriages, deaths, returns from the war or the hunt, and all other remarkable items.

horses and other objects, in order to escape figuring on the list of his fatal predictions.

The most influential and courageous personage of the Assiniboins, the principal obstacle to the ambition of Gaucher or Tchatka, was his own uncle. To a lofty stature, his uncle joined a bravery, a boldness, and a violence which no one dared oppose. He bore the name of the Walking Bow, or Itazipa-man. He was renowned for his valorous deeds in combat. His robe, his casque, his clothing, his tomahawk, lance, and even the bridle and saddle of his steed, were adorned with scalps and trophies taken from his enemies. He was surnamed The One-eyed, or Istagon, because he had lost an eye in battle by an arrow.

Tchatka was jealous of the power of Istagon, and of the influence the latter exercised over the whole tribe. Hitherto he had not attempted the life of his uncle; as he feared his anger, he desired to assure himself of his protection. He needed him as long as those were living who might oppose his ambitious march, the success of which was so little merited on his part: no deed of arms, no trophy gained from the enemy, could authorize him to carry his pretensions higher. By his arts and flattery, by an assiduous attention and feigned submission to the smallest desires of the chief, the cunning young man succeeded in gaining the friendship and confidence of his uncle. They saw each other more frequently: they gave each other feasts and banquets, in which the greatest harmony seemed to reign. One evening Tchatka presented his guest a poisoned dish: the latter, according to the Indian custom, ate the whole. Knowing, by experience, that in a few hours the ingredient would produce its effects, Tchatka invited all the principal braves and soldiers of the camp to repair to his lodge, announcing, that he had an affair of the highest importance to communicate

to them. He placed his Wah-kon in the most suitable and most conspicuous part of his lodge. This Wah-kon of Gaucher's consisted of a stone, painted red, and surrounded by a little fence of small sticks about six inches in length. It lay at a little distance from the fire, which was burning in the centre of the lodge, and opposite the place where he sat. It had occupied this place for several years.

As soon as the whole assembly were arranged, Tchatka disclosed his Wah-kon. He declared to them that the thunder, during a nocturnal storm, had launched this stone into the middle of his lodge; that the voice of the thunder had told him that it possessed the gift and the spirit of prophecy; that the Wah-kon stone had announced that a great event was about to take place in the camp; for that very night the most valiant brave of the tribe would struggle in the arms of death, and that another, more favored than he by the spirits, would take his place, and would be proclaimed great-chief of the camp; that at the very moment the chief expired, the Wah-kon stone would vanish, and accompany the spirit of the deceased into the country of souls.

A mournful silence succeeded this singular declaration. Astonishment, mingled with superstitious dread, was depicted on the faces of all those who composed the assembly. No one dared to contradict the discourse of Tchatka, or call in doubt his words. Besides, on so many other occasions his predictions had been realized at the appointed time. He whose death had been foretold, without being named, was present. As several occupied nearly as high a rank as himself in the camp, and shared the power in concert with Istagon, the latter did not at first apply to himself exclusively the announcement of death which had just been made so mysteriously. He did not yet feel the effects of the poisoned dish, and had not even the slightest suspicion on the subject.

Each withdrew to his own lodge; but dark apprehensions troubled their minds, and agitation controlled their hearts. Who will be the victim announced?

Towards midnight a messenger informed Gaucher that his uncle and friend was very sick, and wished positively to speak with him. The uncle suspected the perfidy of his nephew, and was resolved to stretch him dead at his feet while he yet possessed sufficient strength. The wily Tchatka answered the messenger, "Go, tell Istagon that my visit to him would prove useless. I could not possibly at this moment quit my lodge and my Wah-kon."

In the mean time a great tumult and great confusion arose throughout the camp; consternation became general. In his horrible convulsions, and before they had deprived him of the use of speech, Istagon declared to the braves who first answered his call, that he suspected Tchatka of being the cause of his death. They at once uttered shrieks of rage and vengeance against the latter, and hastened to his lodge to execute their threats. Tchatka, apparently grieved and melancholy, on account of the unhappy lot of his uncle, and trembling with fear at the sight of so many uplifted tomahawks, besought these avengers of Istagon to suspend their wrath and deign to listen to him. "Relations and friends," said he, "Istagon is my uncle; the same blood flows in our veins; he has ever loaded me with marks of his friendship and his confidence. How then could I injure him? A few moments ago you saw him vigorous with health; now that he is grappling with death you come to discharge your vengeance upon me! What have I done to deserve it? I predicted the event! How could I help doing so? Such was the decree of my great Wah-kon! Approach, and observe it closely, for I announced at the same time that my Wah-kon would disappear, in order to accom-

pany the soul of the chief into the region of spirits. If my word is accomplished, and my Wah-kon stone disappears, is it not an evident sign that the death of Istagon is rather a decree of the manitous than a treachery on my part? Wait, and judge for yourselves." These few words had the desired effect; they seated themselves as sentinels around the mysterious stone. Neither calumet nor dish was handed round in this mute circle—silent in appearance, but tumultuous in reality, for their hearts were agitated with different emotions, to which the discourse of the perfidious Tchatka had given rise.

During the two hours that this scene lasted, the fire gradually became dim, and shed only a few feeble glimmerings, which were from time to time reflected from these sombre and sinister faces. In the interval, some runners arrived, to announce the progress of the malady. "Istagon is in convulsions, and utters naught but shrieks of rage and despair against his nephew—his convulsions grow more feeble—he is losing his speech—he can only be heard with difficulty—he is in agony—Istagon is dead." Cries of distress accompanied this last message. At the same instant the mysterious stone burst into a thousand fragments, with a noise like thunder, which palsied all the assistants with fear. In scattering, it filled the lodge with cinders and fire, and wounded severely the nearest of the observers. Stunned and frightened, all took flight from this scene of prodigies. The indignation and revenge which animated them a moment before against Tchatka, gave place to fear, mingled with awe and respect for him, and they no longer dared approach him. The supernatural power of the Wah-kon was acknowledged, and he who had received it from the thunder was honored throughout the camp with the title of Wah-kon-Tangka, that is, *Great Medicine.*

This pretended supernatural affair is thus explained: The wily savage had been a long time preparing the part he intended performing. Some days beforehand he pierced the stone, and charged it with nearly a pound of powder. A train of powder, carefully covered over, conducted from the place in which he was seated to the hole excavated in the stone—a distance of six or eight feet. He seized a favorable instant for lighting a piece of tinder, and at the very moment that the death of the "*One-eyed*" was announced, he fired the train—the stone exploded.

All these subtle and perfidious means of Gaucher must appear very simple in the civilized world, where poison and powder are so often employed in all manner of crimes and misdemeanors; but among the Indians the case was widely different. They were then ignorant of the destructive power of these two articles. It is not, therefore, astonishing that they saw only Wah-kon—that is to say, the supernatural and incomprehensible—in all this.

At his death, Istagon left a great number of friends, especially among the warriors, who were sincerely attached to him on account of his bravery. Several among them, less credulous perhaps than the others, eyed Tchatka with stern and threatening looks every time that he appeared in public. But as he lived retired, rarely quitting his lodge, their disdain and aversion for him were not much remarked. Besides, as I have already observed, he had a numerous band of relatives; the members of his family, on whom he could rely, with his partisans, formed a fourth part of all the camps, or about eighty lodges.

Tchatka was well persuaded that a politic stroke was still necessary to gain the undecided, the discontented, and the incredulous. Circumstances seemed to favor this measure; he resolved to have recourse to it while the prodigy of the

stone was still fresh in their memory. It has occasionally happened, too, that on the death of a chief, a numerous camp divides into different companies, above all if there had existed any anterior discord. Tchatka, therefore, shut himself in his lodge during several days, without communicating openly with any one. The camp expected something marvellous. The causes of this long retreat were discussed; they lost themselves in conjectures; all, however, were fully persuaded that some new manifestation, either good or evil, would be the result. On the fifth day of Tchatka's retreat, a general uneasiness was manifested among the savages, and they spoke of dividing.

What was the famous Tchatka, the Great Medicine—the hope of some, and the terror of others—doing? Nothing else than making a drum, or *tchant-cheega-kabo*, of such dimensions that never any Indian had imagined. Some time beforehand, in the premeditation of his exploit, he had secretly sawed a piece of an enormous hollow tree, very suitable to his design. Its height three feet, and its breadth two, his drum resembled a churn. One end was covered with goatskin, and the other only with wood. He employed several days in cutting and scraping the interior of this famous instrument, in order to render it lighter. On the exterior of this *tchant-cheega-kabo*, he painted the figures of a grizzly bear, of a tortoise, of a bison bull—three superior genii in the catalogue of the Indian manitous. Between these figures were painted human heads, without scalps, filling every space, about eighty in number. On the skin of the drum, a chief of the Black-Feet tribe was represented, without a scalp, in *black*, and daubed with vermilion.

He had finished his work, and made all his preparations. At midnight the voice of Tchatka was heard, with the muffled sound of his *tchant-cheega*, which resounded through the

camp. As though just coming forth from an ecstasy, he offered aloud his thanksgivings and his invocations to the Great Spirit, and to all his favorite manitous, to thank them for the new favors with which they had just crowned him, the effects of which were to reflect upon the whole tribe. Without delay, every one listened to his call, and repaired to his lodge. Observing the usual customs, the counsellors, the principal among the *braves* and soldiers, entered the first, and soon filled his abode; while hundreds of the curious, old and young, collected and besieged it without. Curiosity is at its highest pitch: they are on fire to learn the explanation of the mysterious news; they wait with anxious impatience.

As a preliminary, Tchatka intoned a beautiful war-song, without paying the slightest attention to the multitude which pressed around him. In his quality of medicine-man, his head-dress was made of swan's-down; his face and his breast were painted in figures of different colors; his lips, dyed with vermilion, indicated that he thirsted for blood, and breathed the spirit of war. When he perceived that the whole band was around him, he arose, and with the voice of a stentor, addressed the assembly.

"I dreamed," said he, "friends and warriors, I dreamed! During five days and five nights, I was admitted into the land of spirits; living, I walked among the dead. My eyes have witnessed frightful scenes; my ears have heard frightful moans, sighs, lamentations, and howlings! Have you courage to listen to me? Can I suffer you to become the victims of your most cruel enemies? For, know that danger is near—the enemy is not far distant!"

An aged man, whose white hairs announced seventy winters, the grand counsellor of the nation, and a juggler, replied:

"A man who loves his tribe, conceals nothing from the

people. When danger is at hand, he speaks; when the enemy is in sight, he goes out to meet him. You say you have visited the region of souls; I believe in your words. I also, in my dreams, have frequently conversed with the ghosts of the departed. Tchatka, though young has given us extraordinary proofs of his power; the last hour of Istagon was terrible, but who dares rise to blame you? You only predicted the two events: the chief died, and the Wah-kon disappeared. I also performed wonders in my youth. Now I am old; but although my limbs begin to be feeble, I have yet a clear mind. We will listen to your words with attention, and then we will decide on the course we ought to take. I have spoken."

The speech of the old man had a favorable effect on the whole assembly. Perhaps he was in Tchatka's secret. All the succeeding orations manifested a feeling of inclination to the murderer. The latter, reassured concerning the dispositions in regard to him, continued his recital with firmness and showed confidence respecting his future plans.

"Let those who have ears, hearken to me! those who have not, are free to go! You know me. I am a man of few words, but what I advance is true, and the events which I predict arrive. During five days and five nights my spirit was wafted amid the spirits of the dead, especially of our relatives and friends—of our friends whose bones are whitening on the plains, and which the wolves drag into their lairs —of our friends who still, unavenged, wander up and down, amid swamp, and snow, and ice, in sterile and forsaken deserts, which produce neither fruit, nor root, nor animal, to subsist on. It is a place of darkness, where sunlight never enters. They are subject to all privations—cold, hunger, thirst. We, their friends, their relatives, their brethren, are the cause of their long sufferings and fearful woes. Their

sighs and moans were unsupportable. I trembled in every limb; my hair stood erect on my head; I believed my lot fixed with theirs; when a kindly spirit touched my hand and said: 'Tchatka, return to the place which thou hast left; return to thy body, for it is not yet time for thee to enter the land of spirits. Return, and thou shalt be the bearer of good news to thy nation—the shades of thy deceased relations shall be avenged, and their deliverance is nigh. In thy lodge thou wilt find a drum, painted with figures that soon thou shalt learn to know.' At this instant the spirit left me. Coming forth from my dream, I found my drum, painted as you now behold it. When my body was restored to animation, I found that I had not changed position. During four days and four nights I had the same vision, varied sometimes, but always accompanied with complaints and reproaches concerning our recent defeats by our enemies, the Black-Feet. The fifth night, the manitou addressed me anew, and said: 'Tchatka, henceforth the *tchant-cheega-kabo* shall be thy Wah-kon. Arise, follow without delay the war-path which leads to the Black-Feet. At the source of the Milk River thirty lodges of the enemies are encamped. Set out instantly, and after five days' march thou shalt reach the camp. On the sixth thou shalt make a fearful carnage. Every head painted on the drum represents a scalp, and the taking of these scalps will appease the manes of thy deceased parents and friends. Then only will they be enabled to quit the frightful abode where thou beholdest them, to enter the beauteous plains where plenty reigns, and where suffering and privation are unknown. At this moment a Black-Feet war-party is prowling around the camp. They sought a favorable moment, but not finding it, have gone in search of a weaker enemy. Set out, then, without delay; thou shalt find an easy victory; thou shalt find in the Black-Feet camp

only old men, women, and children.' Such were the words of the manitou, and he disappeared. I returned to my body. I recovered my senses. I have told you all."* Thus spoke this extraordinary man.

Before continuing the strange history of Tchatka and of his predictions, it will be necessary to explain that he gained over to his cause and person several active young men, the best runners in the camp. From them he obtained in secret all the news and information that they could gather in their long expeditions, either as to the hunt, or as to the proximity, number, and position of the enemy. The juggler, as soon as he is informed, makes his medicine or incantations, and then prophecies to the people, who, not suspecting the trick, deem all supernatural that comes from the impostor's mouth.

Let us continue: the discourse of Tchatka (for we will so style him in our narrative, although he had now received that of Wah-kon-Tangka or Great Medicine) had produced the effect he desired on all his auditory. The Assiniboins entertained a mortal hatred against the Black-Feet; this detestation had been transmitted from father to son, and augmented by continual aggressions and reprisals. We may form an idea of the propensity that Indians have for war, from the expression which they use to designate it. They call it "The Breath of their Nostrils." Each family numbered some member slain by their dreadful adversary.

---

* Many of our Indian tribes celebrate, towards the close of winter, the "Feast of Dreams." The ceremonies are often prolonged to ten days or a fortnight. They might rather be termed Bacchanalia or Carnival. Even the Indians call it the "Feast of Madmen." These are days of great disorder;—when all they dream or pretend to dream must be executed. Dances, songs, and music form the principal ceremonies of the feast.

Tchatka's words aroused in their hearts the most violent thirst of vengeance. The *sassaskwi*, or war-whoop, was the unanimous response of all the warriors in the camp. They lighted bonfires, formed groups for chanting invocations to their manitous, and executed the scalp-dance. Then each one examined his arms, and the whole scene changed into a vast workshop. The soldiers sharpened the double-edged knives and daggers, filed anew the lances and arrows, vermilioned the battle-axes and the tomahawks, bridled and saddled the horses; while the women mended and prepared the moccasins, the leggins, and the sacks of provisions necessary for the journey. As though it were a grand gala occasion, every one daubed his face with vermilion, according to his fancy, and arrayed himself in his handsomest ornaments. Never had so lively and so unanimous an enthusiasm appeared in the tribe. All relied implicitly on the promises of Tchatka, and counted on certain victory. The warriors felicitated themselves on having at last found an opportunity to efface the shame and opprobium inflicted on the nation, and to avenge the death of their kindred. The camp breathed naught but war. The man who had set all in motion remained silent and alone. Tranquil in his lodge, beside his big drum, he would neither take part in the public rejoicings, nor join in the singing and dancing the war-dance.

When the war-party was formed, and ready to depart, several old men and soldiers were deputed to Tchatka, to ask him to take the lead, and conduct the enterprise in person. He replied: "You have seen that the two events that I predicted have drawn upon me the ill-will of a great number. I am young—I am no warrior—choose an older and more experienced man than I to lead the braves to battle. I will stay here; leave me to my dreams and my drum." The deputies reported his response to their com-

rades; but the latter insisted anew that Tchatka be of the company. A new deputation, composed this time of the nearest relatives of Istagon, sought Tchatka in the name of the whole camp, and announced to him that henceforward he should be their war-chief, and all promised him respect and obedience. After some hesitation, Tchatka surrendered to their entreaties, saying: "Friends and relations, I forget the wrongs that I have endured. If my predictions are accomplished—if we find the camp of the Black-Feet which I have designated—if we tear from the enemy as many scalps as are on my drum, will you in future believe in my great medicine? If I declare to you that on the second day after our departure we shall detect the trail of the war-party that has passed near our camp—if we slay on the battle-field the great chief of the Black-Feet, and you see him as he is painted on my drum, without a scalp and without hands;—if all this be accomplished literally, will you in future respond to my call?" They all accepted his conditions.

Immediately Tchatka arose, intoned his war-song to the sound of his drum, and to the acclamations of the whole tribe. He then joined his band, but without arms, not even a knife. He ordered them to fasten his drum on the back of a good horse, which he had led beside him by one of his faithful spies and runners, by the bridle.

In order to understand better the issue, it may not be irrelevant to say a few words on the Indian chiefs. Each nation is divided into different bands or tribes, and each tribe counts several villages. Every village has its chief, to whom they submit, in proportion to the respect or terror which his personal qualities inspire. The power of a chief is sometimes merely nominal; sometimes, also, his authority is absolute, and his name, as well as his influence, extends beyond the limits of his own village, so that the whole tribe to

which he belongs acknowledge him as their head. This was the case among the Assiniboins in the time of Tchatka. Courage, address, and an enterprising spirit may elevate every warrior to the highest honors, especially if his father or an uncle enjoyed the dignity of chief before him, and that he has a numerous family ready to maintain his authority and avenge his quarrels. Yet when the seniors and warriors have installed him with all the requisite ceremonies, it must not be supposed that he, on this account, arrogates to himself the least exterior appearance of rank or dignity. He is too well aware that his rank hangs by a frail thread, which may quite easily be broken. He must gain the confidence of his uncertain subjects, or retain them by fear. A great many families in the village are better off than the chief;—dress better, are richer in arms, horses, and other possessions. Like the ancient German chiefs, he gains the confidence and attachment of his soldiers, first, by his bravery, more frequently by presents, which only serves to impoverish him the more. If a chief does not succeed in gaining the love of his subjects, they will despise his authority and quit him at the slightest opposition on his part; for the customs of the Indians admit no conditions by which they may enforce respect from their subjects.

It rarely happens, among the Western tribes, that a chief attains great power, unless he is at the head of a numerous family. I have sometimes seen whole villages composed of the descendants and relatives of the chief. This kind of nomadic community has a certain patriarchal character, and is generally the best regulated and the most pacific. The chief is less a master than a father, who reigns in a numerous household by the wish to do all in his power to render all happy. It may be said in general of the Indian nations, that tribes little united with each other, rent even by

discord and jealousy, can possess little power and exercise it less.

Let us return to Tchatka, the grand chief-elect of the principal band of the Assiniboins. He found himself in command of four hundred warriors. They marched the rest of the night, and during the whole of the next day, with the greatest precautions and in the best order, so as to prevent all surprise. Some scouts alone ran over and beat the surrounding country, leaving in their passage signals and rods planted in the earth, and inclined in such a manner as to indicate the route that the little army ought to follow. About evening they descried a thick wood, on the border of a little stream, and there erected, hastily, a kind of parapet, or defence, with the dried branches and trunks of trees, and thus passed behind it a peaceful night. In the morning they found themselves in the midst of an innumerable herd of bisons, and stopped some instants to renew their stock of provisions.* Towards nightfall a faithful scout returned and communicated secretly with Tchatka. After marching still several miles, the chief, with the beating of his drum, Wahkon, collected all his warriors, and pointing with his finger to a high hill, some miles distant, he informed them that

* I have often spoken of the bisons, improperly called buffaloes, without mentioning the great use which the Indians make of this interesting animal. They supply almost all the necessaries of life. Their skins form lodges or dwellings, and serve as clothing, litters, bridles, and saddle coverings, vessels to hold water, boats to cross lakes and rivers; with the hair, the Indians make their cordage; with the sinews, bow-strings and thread for clothes, as well as glue; the shoulder-blade is spade and pickaxe. The bison is their daily bread, their chief food. The dung of the animal, called *bois-de-vache*, furnishes abundant fuel. Last year 100,000 buffalo-skins were sent from the desert to the warehouses of St. Louis. With the proceeds the Indians obtain arms and all they need.

there they would trace the war-party of the Black-Feet, of which he had dreamed before leaving the camp. Several horsemen set out without delay to reconnoitre the enemy. At the spot indicated they found the path tracked by nearly a hundred horses. All the warriors redoubled their zeal, ardor, and confidence in their new chief. The two succeeding days offered nothing very singular. They again stopped in the evening of the fifth day, without discovering the smallest vestige of proximity to the hostile camp they sought. The watchful scouts were gone, during the day, in different directions, without bringing back the least news, except the one who had been in secret communication with Tchatka. Several of the most ancient of the warriors murmured boldly, saying, "that the day predicted by the chief, on which they would surely see the enemy, had passed."

But Tchatka silenced them all, replying to them: "You seem still to doubt my words—the time is not past! Rather say, the time is arrived. You appear still young in experience—and yet a great many winters are beginning to whiten your heads. Where do you think you will find the lodges of your enemies? Is it in the open plain, or on the summit of an elevation? With a single glance of the eye we perceive all that is there, and is it there you pretend to discover them; and that, too, in a moment in which those who should protect their wives and children are afar? The bear and the jaguar hide their little ones in their dens, or in the depth of impenetrable forests; the wolf hides them in a hole; the goat and the deer cover them with hay. When you hunt the deer, do you not peep through the trees and the briars? In the fox and the badger hunt, you seek their lairs. Let some one go and examine the little point of forest near the large rock, at the end of the plain in which we are."

Instantly, several of the most courageous and the most

experienced in the stratagems of warfare were sent to the discovery. Favored by the night, and with all possible precautions, they entered the little wood, and made all their observations without being perceived. In the silence of midnight, they reported their news to Tchatka and his companions — "that they had discovered the Black-Feet encampment in the place indicated by the chief; that the lodges were occupied solely by old men, women, and children; that they could not hear the voices of any youth; and that all the horses were gone." This account filled these barbarous hearts with joy. The rest of the night was passed in songs and dances to the sound of the great drum, in juggleries and invocations to the manitous who had inspired Tchatka during his five days and five nights of dreams, and which had conducted his spirit into the regions of souls.

At the break of day the four hundred Assiniboin warriors surrounded the thirty feeble wigwams of the Black-Feet. The cry of war and of vengeance, which they shouted simultaneously, like so many bloodthirsty furies, awakened and filled with dreadful fear those unhappy mothers and children left unprotected there. In accordance with their expectations, the Assiniboins found few men in the camp; all had gone with the war-party of which I have made mention. The small number of Black-Feet youth defended themselves with desperate bravery; but they could not long resist so many enemies. The combat was short; the carnage bloody and hideous. Old men, women, and children, fell an easy prey to the cruel Assiniboins. Only two young Black-Feet escaped this shocking butchery. An Assiniboin who participated in the combat gave the recital of it to M. Denig, and declared that with his own hand he had killed fourteen children and three women. M. Denig asked him if he had killed them all with arrows. "Some of them," an-

swered he; "but failing in arrows, I had recourse to the tomahawk and the dagger." He added, at the same time, that they tore from the arms of their mothers, and took with them a great number of little children, and that on their way, amid their songs and the scalp-dances, they amused themselves with flaying them alive and running pointed sticks through their bodies, in order to roast them alive before the fire. The piercing shrieks of these little creatures fell upon the ear of these barbarians, amid their inhuman orgies, like the sweetest and most delightful melody. All that a pitiless and savage heart could invent of torture, was put in practice on this occasion. The Assiniboins declare that they satiated themselves with cruelty, to satisfy the manes of their deceased parents and kindred, and their implacable and long-wished-for vengeance against the greatest of their enemies, the Black-Feet. The number of scalps taken surpassed greatly the number of heads painted on the drum.

When returning to their own grounds, at the first encampment which they made, one of the warriors remarked, and loud enough for Tchatka's ear, "that the Black-Foot chief had neither been seen nor slain." The chief replied: "Our work is not yet finished; we will therefore have another encounter before repairing to our homes. The Black-Foot chief shall die! I saw him scalped in my dream: such he was painted on the drum by the manitous. His scalp shall be taken from him with his own knife."

A gentle shower fell during the night; a heavy fog obscured the sky during the morning, which obliged the whole company of warriors to remain together, in order not to lose their way. After some hours' march, the sound of a gun discharged in front of the line, informed those who brought up the rear that an attack had commenced. Every one

pressed forward to join the combatants. It was a rencontre with a troop of twenty or thirty Black-Feet that the fog had separated from their companions. Notwithstanding all the manœuvres of Tchatka to shelter himself from danger, he found himself enveloped in the midst of the fight, ignorant which way to turn. The Black-Feet defended themselves courageously, but they were forced to yield to the superior number of adversaries. Several escaped by means of the fog, which covered them from view.

In the heat of the engagement, Tchatka's horse was killed under him; the horseman and his steed rolled in the dust. At the same instant a Black-Foot, of lofty stature and prodigious strength, hurled his lance at him, which only grazed the head of his enemy, and struck deep, quivering in the earth. Then he attacked him, knife in hand. Tchatka rose rapidly from his fall, and, coward as he was, in self-defence he displayed skill and strength. He seized the arm of his terrible adversary, and used every effort to wrest the knife. As the combat in front of the line had ceased, the Assiniboins, perceiving the absence of their chief, returned to look for him. They found him prostrate, and still combating with this powerful enemy. The Black-Foot now disengaged, raised his arm to plunge his knife into the heart of Tchatka, when he received the blow of a tomahawk on his skull, which stretched him without consciousness beside his vanquished adversary. The latter, in his turn, seized the murderous instrument and finished the Black-Foot. On rising he shouted: "Friends, behold the chief of the Black-Feet, for his medal reveals and proclaims him! I hold in my hand the knife of Mâttan Zia (Bear's-Foot), whose mighty deeds you know, and who has been, during many years, the terror of our nation." With the same blood-stained knife he scalped him and cut off his two hands, in

in order to accomplish the last point of his great prophecy, which will be repeated from father to son among the Assiniboins, to the last generation. On this occasion Tchatka received the third name, Minàyougha, or the Knife-holder.

The whole tribe gave themselves up to a delirium of joy, which I could not describe, when the expedition returned with so many trophies gained from their most cruel enemies. The dances and incantations to the sound of the mysterious drum, and the public rejoicing which commonly accompany the scalps, were renewed a hundred times during the space of a single moon. The glory of Tchatka and his manitous was chanted in the whole camp. They announced him, with the highest acclamations, the Minàyougha and the Wah-kon-Tangka *par excellence*, whom none could resist. He lost none of the advantages which he had gained in public opinion by his profound and cruel stratagem. The whole command of the tribe was intrusted to him, and never chief among the Assiniboins attracted so much respect and fear.

Like a true bashaw, or modern Mormon, he selected three wives at once, without even consulting them. Two of these had been already betrothed to two young and very influential warriors. Notwithstanding their protest, the parents believed themselves honored in being allied to the family of the great chief, by the choice which he made of their daughters, and they were conducted to the lodge of Tchatka. To maintain peace in his new household, and put the discontented in good-humor, by destroying every hope, he gave orders to one of his partisans to poison, in secret, his two competitors. The better to shield himself from all suspicion, he set off in the chase. On his return, they gave him the news of their death. He contented himself by saying,

"that those who were capable of contradicting him in the smallest trifles, or who presumed to despise his power, were in imminent danger of death."

In this manner the principal accomplice associated with Tchatka, for executing his numerous poisonings, fulfilled his mandates. We shall say a word concerning the relations in which these two detestable men stood. The hidden abettor was a near relative of the chief. He was about five feet in height, and of a robust and vigorous frame. He had lost an eye in a quarrel with a young man; over the other hung a great flap of flesh, beginning from the middle of his forehead, and extending as far as his under-jaw. He had a flat nose, thick lips, a large, gaping mouth, which displayed two rows of oval teeth, as white as ivory. He concealed lightly his ugly frontispiece under tufts of thick, filthy black hair, matted together with gum and resin, mingled with vermilion. For several years, when he visited Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellowstone, he was the terror of all the children, for it was impossible to meet a human face more frightful and more loathsome. Undoubtedly, the marks of contempt that he everywhere received, on account of his exterior, excited in him the inveterate hatred that he bore to his race. The artful Tchatka, perceiving some advantages that he might draw from a man of this nature, in the execution of his designs, had long before taken him as associate. He always treated him with kindness, made him presents, sought his confidence on various occasions, and flattered his vicious inclinations. He could, in consequence, always rely upon this man, when there was occasion to injure his equals, and the poison had been administered so adroitly to the two young warriors that neither he nor Tchatka were suspected. On the contrary, in the opinion of the whole tribe, a new gem had been added to the brilliant reputation of Wah-kon-

Tangka, who could, when distant or near, control the lives of his subjects.

During the first years that Tchatka found himself at the head of his tribe, success very generally crowned all his undertakings, and his renown passed into all the neighboring tribes. However, it sometimes happened that his warriors were beaten. On such occasions he was always the first to take flight, giving for excuse to his comrades that his great medicine (his drum) carried him away in spite of himself. It was most prudent to credit his word, for should any one be so rash as to doubt, he would be scarcely sure of escaping the sudden and mysterious death which seemed promptly to attack all his enemies in his own camp.

In 1830, after having predicted success, he experienced his first great defeat, on the part of the Black-Feet, leaving on the plain beyond sixty warriors slain, and nearly an equal number wounded. From this moment dates the commencement of his fall; the prestige which hitherto surrounded his name and his deeds began to fail. About this time the fur-company had received a new and very large stock of provisions at Fort Union. It had been furnished during two years with merchandise, for executing the treaty among the Indian nations in Upper Missouri.

In hopes of repairing, in some manner, the great loss that he had just undergone, to arouse the dejected courage of his soldiers, to "cover the dead,"—that is to say, to put an end to the mourning in the families which had lost near kindred in the last battle, Tchatka promised them boldly, "that he would render them all rich, and would load them with an abundance of spoils, so that all the horses of the tribe would not be able to carry them. He had been favored with a new dream,—a dream which will not deceive them, provided they enter into his designs, and that they be faithful in the

execution of his orders." He had formed the project of seizing Fort Union, with a band of two hundred select warriors. Tchatka presented himself there. He affected a singular friendship for the whites. He attempted to make the superintendent, M. M——, believe that he was *en route*, with his band, for the country of the Minataries of Missouri, their enemies; that they had need of some munitions of war; and that they intended continuing on their way at daybreak. Hospitality was kindly accorded to them. The chief played his part so well, that the ordinary precaution of disarming guests, and putting their weapons under lock and key, was neglected on this occasion. The plan that Tchatka had developed to his warriors, was, to retire to the different chambers of the fort, and to massacre, during their sleep, at a given signal, all those who occupied them. By a happy incident, some days previous to this enterprise, all the Canadian employées at the fort, to the number of about eighty, had come to Fort Union for goods to trade with the Crows and the Black-Feet. Notwithstanding this strong reinforcement, the savages might have succeeded in their design. An Assiniboin had a sister married to one of the merchants from the North. Desirous of saving the life of his sister, and of sheltering her in the *mêlée* which was to take place, he communicated to her, under the strictest secrecy, the intentions of the chief, inviting her to come and pass the night in his room, that he might the better protect her. The woman promised to follow him; but went immediately to warn her husband against the danger which menaced him as well as all the whites at the fort. The husband announced the plot to the superintendent and to all the gentlemen in charge.

The employées, one after the other, were called, without arousing the least suspicion. They quitted their apartments

quietly, were armed in the twinkling of an eye, took possession of the two bastions and of all the important points of the fort. When all the precautions were taken, Tchatka and the principal braves of his band were invited to repair to the parlor of the commandant, who openly reproached them with their black treachery. Giving no heed to their protestations, he gave them their choice, either to quit the fort without blows, or to be chased from it by the big guns (cannon), which were levelled at them. Tchatka accepted the former without hesitation, and instantly withdrew, confused and vexed at having lost so fine an opportunity of enriching himself and his tribe, at having failed in his promise, and in the accomplishment of his pretended dream.

Tchatka had exhausted all his medicine sack, or provision of poisons. His former Northern friends had refused to furnish him any more. He was absolutely determined on procuring some, for poison was his only means of getting rid of those who opposed his ambition or contradicted him in his plans. He performed his diabolical deeds with such skill and secrecy, that the Indians were firmly persuaded that their chief had only to will it, and they would die. Hence their abject submission to his every and least caprice. This people, formerly free as air, was reduced, during a succession of years, to the condition of slaves to the most cowardly and pitiless tyrant.

In the course of the year 1836, Tchatka presented himself again at Fort Union, at the head of a band of hunters. They went there to sell their peltry,—viz., buffalo-robes, beaver-skins, and the fur of badgers, foxes, bears, deer, goats, and big-horns; in a word, the fruits of their hunting excursions, in exhange for tobacco, ornaments, blankets, guns, ammunition, knives, daggers, and lances. A large portion of the peltry belonged to Tchatka. He offered them to a mer-

chant for a very small quantity of tobacco, telling him, secretly, "that he was in absolute want of poison, whatever it might cost," and begging him to procure a large amount; "without which, the charm which surrounded him among his people would abandon him hopelessly." His proposition was heard with great horror. He only received in reply severe representations on the baseness of his conduct and on his infamous and frightful proceedings. But these were ineffectual on his perverted heart, hardened by an astonishing succession of unheard-of crimes and atrocities. He left the fort with evident tokens of discontent, at having been frustrated in his attempt.

During the two years which succeeded, Tchatka conducted several war-parties, sometimes with success and sometimes with reverses. It was perceptible that his years were advancing; that his manitous were less faithful than formerly; that his predictions were no longer realized; that those who criticised his arrangements lived, notwithstanding. Several even dared to defy his power.

In the spring of 1838, the small-pox (it was not well known how) was communicated to the Indian tribes in Upper Missouri. The ravages of this disease entirely changed the position which Tchatka had hitherto held among the Indians. The fine camp of Tchatka, composed of twelve hundred warriors, was reduced, in this single season, to eighty men capable of bearing arms. Other tribes experienced trials still more severely. This scourge counted more than 10,000 victims among the Crows and the Black-Feet; the Minataries were reduced from one thousand to five hundred; the Mandans, the noblest among the races in the Upper Missouri, counting six hundred warriors before the epidemic, were reduced to thirty-two, others say to nineteen solely! A great number committed suicide, in despair; some with

their lances and other warlike instruments, but the greater part by throwing themselves from a high rock which overlooks the Missouri.

In the course of the following year, Tchatka formed the design of seizing, by stratagem, the large village of the Mandans,* and of taking all the horses and effects which they could find in it.

The village of the Mandans was then permanent, and in the neighborhood of the present site of Fort Clark. About five miles lower dwelt the Arickaras, new allies and friends of the Mandans, who numbered about five hundred warriors, and had escaped the contagion, because they were absent in the hunting-grounds when the scourge broke out.

Tchatka was ignorant of the circumstances of the position of the Arickaras, in respect to the Mandans, and had scarcely given a thought to the proximity of the two tribes. Having collected the sad remnant of his warriors, he communicated to them the design he had formed. "We will go," said he, "to offer the calumet of peace to the Mandans. They will accept it with joy," added he, "for they are feeble, and have the hope of finding in us a protection against the Sioux, their most furious enemies. As soon as we are admitted in the village, under these appearances of friendship, we will scatter ourselves here and there throughout their lodges, then, by a simultaneous movement, we will fall, with cutlass and dag-

* I have mentioned the Mandans, and some of their traditions, in several of my letters. Their Indian name is See-pohs-ka-nu-ma-ka-kee, which signifies a partridge. They have a remarkable tradition concerning the deluge. On a high hill existing in their territory, they say that the big canoe (the ark) rested. Every year, when the willow buds, they celebrate this event by grand festivals and noisy ceremonies. Their tradition says that the branch brought back to the great canoe by the bird was a willow-branch, full of leaves. The bird they allude to was the dove, and it is forbidden, in their religious code, to kill it.

ger, on all that remain of the Mandans. They cannot escape us. All that they possess will belong to us." The plan appeared practicable to them. Desiring to do something which might ameliorate their condition, the Assiniboins accepted heartily the proposition of their chief.

The secret of this expedition was confided to no one. They passed by Fort Union, so as to procure powder, as well as the balls necessary, and a few pounds of tobacco, "wherewith to smoke peace." Arrived in sight of the village, they stopped, and made signals of friendship to the Mandans, requesting them to come and join them. Tchatka placed himself on a high hill, and beating his drum, he chanted his invocations to his manitous. He deputed twelve men of his tribe, bearing a little flag and the calumet of peace, with orders to smoke it when half way between him and the village. Through good fortune for the Mandans, some Arickaras, friends and allies, when returning from the chase, had stopped among them. Of all the nations of the Upper Missouri, the Arickaras are considered the most deceitful and treacherous. Tchatka, without suspecting it, found himself taken in his own nets. He came to overthrow the little Mandan tribe, and then return laden with booty and with scalps. He fell into the snare which he had spread for others, and found himself at the mercy of worthy competitors.

After the Assiniboin deputies had smoked the calumet with the Mandans, the Arickaras set forth with all haste to go and announce to their chiefs this sudden and unforeseen reconciliation. The occasion was very favorable. Immediately the war-whoop resounded throughout the camp of the Arickaras. A few moments sufficed to saddle their horses and arm themselves. They had evidently a great advantage over their adversaries. Hidden by a headland

of the forest, in the low valley, or bottom of the Missouri, they filed silently, and without being perceived, into the village of the Mandans.

The ceremony of smoking the calumet of peace is ordinarily prolonged during several hours. First takes place a friendly interchange of news, a conversation in which each party boasts his lofty deeds, or the exploits he has achieved over his enemies, an exposition which is intended to excite the admiration of the opposite party. They then pass to speeches, in which the points in question are to be discussed. If the calumet is accepted, and passes from mouth to mouth, the resolutions are ratified and peace is concluded.

They were at this point, and were disposing themselves to enter the village together, when suddenly the Arickaras presented themselves and shouted their war-cry. At the first discharge of guns and arrows, the twelve Assiniboin deputies lost their lives. Their scalps were at once taken off and their bodies horribly mutilated. It was the affair of a moment. About three hundred Arickaras, shouting cries of victory, mingled with imprecations, directed their steps towards the hill, in order to continue the massacre of the Assiniboins. At the first signal of attack, Tchatka sprang to his horse and fled. The greater part of the Assiniboins, being on foot, were easily overtaken by their enemies on horseback, and soon fell under the blows of the latter. Many among them, however, defended themselves like braves. Notwithstanding their great inferiority in number, they killed three Arickaras; and, although wounded, were so nappy as to gain the forest, and escape the slaughter.

After the battle, the corpses of fifty-three Assiniboins remained stretched on the plain, a prey for vultures and wolves. But where is their leader, the great chief of the Assiniboins? Where was he during the fight? This famous Tchatka, this

Wah-kon-Tangka, this Minàyougha, this hero of the great drum had been the first to fly on his fleet horse. But the Arickaras had fresher animals, and pressed on in hot pursuit. As they gained on him they fired repeatedly, and at last killed his horse beneath him. Tchatka rose instantly. The forest is before him; if he can reach it, there is yet a shadow of hope. He spares no effort; fear lends him wings; old as he is, he takes the start and gains the goal before his most impetuous enemies in the pursuit can reach him. Some of his own soldiers, witnesses of this famous running-match, conferred on him the name of Ta-to-kah-nan, or the wild-goat, the fleetest animal of our plains.

Tchatka rejoined his soldiers in the forest. Thirty only had escaped the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the Arickaras; the greater number were wounded, and some of them mortally. They were the feeble remains, the last men of a band of twelve hundred warriors. Tchatka hung his head, and hardly dared to look at them. All his nation had disappeared. Two of his sons fell in the last combat. His *tchant-cheega-kabo*, or great drum, was in the hands of his enemies; his favorite horse killed. He had no longer a band, over whom he could exert his influence, and accomplish his execrable intentions of poisoning.

After this defeat, the band of Tchatka having become too reduced to form a camp, was united to the "*Gens du nord*," or Northern people, as they termed them; that is, to another great branch of the Assiniboins. From that time Tchatka no longer mingled with public affairs. However, he always continued to pass for a great medicine-man, and was sometimes consulted, particularly on great and dangerous occasions. He never ceased, until his death, to inspire all who approached him with a certain respect, mingled with fear and terror.

"As we live, so we die," says the proverb. The end of this wicked chief was not less remarkable than his whole life. What follows I have from an eye-witness. I cite the authority of Mr. Denig, an intimate friend, and a man of high probity, from whom I have received all the information that I have offered you concerning the Assiniboins, and who resided among them during twenty-two years.

In the autumn of 1843, the "Northern People" repaired to Fort Union to make exchanges in trade with their pelfry. The first who presented himself at the entrance of the fort, to shake hands with M. Denig, was old Tchatka. "Brother," said he, laughing, "I came to the fort to die among the whites!" M. Denig, attaching no importance to these words, the aged man repeated them to him anew. "Did you understand what I said? This is my last visit to the fort. I shall die here!" M. Denig then inquired concerning the health of Tchatka—whether he felt ill. He spoke of it to other Indians, but all assured him that Tchatka was in good health as usual; they added, however, that before quitting the village he had predicted to them, "that his last hour was approaching, and that before the next sunset his spirit would be in the region of souls." The gentlemen of the fort, informed of this news, ordered Tchatka to be called, and questioned him concerning his strange declaration. They also feared some artifice on his part, and recalled the tricks, deceits, and cruelties that he had practiced on his tribe, as well as his black treason, and his odious plots against the occupants of the fort, in 1831. He declared positively to these gentlemen that he was quite well; that he experienced no kind of indisposition. He added: "I repeat to you, my hour is come—my manitous call me—I have seen them in my dream—I must depart! Yes, tomorrow my spirit will take flight into the land of ghosts!"

In the evening he took a good supper, and slept peacefully after, while the other Indians amused themselves during the whole night. On the morrow, Tchatka presented himself once more at the office of Mr. Denig, and had a slight spitting of blood. They tried to make him take some remedy, but he refused, saying: "All is useless—henceforth life is insupportable to me—I will and I must die—I have told you so." A little time after he left the fort with the other Indians, and went to the margin of the river. He soon had a second attack, more violent than the first. They placed him on a sleigh, intending to transport him to the Indian camp, but he died on the way, in the most terrible convulsions. It was, according to all appearances, the same "grand medicine" which he had administered on a great number of occasions to his unfortunate victims, during his sad and long administration as chief, that at last terminated his own career.

The lifeless body of this too famous chief was carried in great ceremony into the Indian village, twenty-two miles distant from the fort. The whole tribe assisted at his obsequies. The corpse, after being painted, ornamented with their richest decorations, and wrapped in a scarlet-colored blanket and a beautiful buffalo-robe embroidered with porcupine* quills, was at last elevated and fastened between two branches of a large tree, amid the tears, cries, and lamentations of the multitude.

Such was the ascendency that his name and deeds exerted over the minds of the whole Assiniboin tribe, that the place where his mortal remains repose is at the present day an

---

* *En porc-epic* is the term of the *voyageurs*. The long quills of the animal resemble those of a bird, and are stripped off by the women in threads, for embroidering.

object of the highest veneration. The Assiniboins never pronounce the name of Tchatka but with respect. They believe that his shade guards the sacred tree; that he has power to procure them abundance of buffalo and other animals, or to drive the animals from the country. Hence, whenever they pass they offer sacrifices and oblations; they present the calumet to the tutelary spirits and manes of Tchatka. He is, according to their calendar, the Wah-kon-Tangka *par excellence*, the greatest man or genius that ever visited their nation. The Assiniboins never bury their dead. They bind the bodies with thongs of raw hide between the branches of large trees, and more frequently place them on scaffolds, to protect them from the wolves and other wild animals. They are higher than a man can reach. The feet are always turned to the west. There they are left to decay. When the scaffolds or the trees to which the dead are attached fall, through old age, the relatives bury all the other bones, and place the skulls in a circle in the plain, with the faces turned towards the centre. They preserve these with care, and consider them objects of religious veneration. You will generally find there several bison skulls. In the centre stands the medicine-pole, about twenty feet high, to which Wah-kons are hung, to guard and protect the sacred deposit. The Indians call the cemetery the *village of the dead*. They visit it at certain seasons of the year, to converse affectionately with their deceased relatives and friends, and always leave some present.

The Assiniboins give their name to the Assiniboin River, the great tributary of the Red River of the North, in the English Hudson's Bay Company's territory. The word Assiniboin signifies *stone-cooking people*. This tribe had, in former times, for want of better utensils, the custom of boiling their meat in holes dug in the ground and lined with

raw skins. The water and the meat were put together in these holes; then large red-hot stones were cast in until the meat was boiled. This custom is now almost obsolete, since they get pots from the whites. The original mode is used, however, on great occasions or medicine-feasts. The Assiniboin language is a dialect of the Dacotah or Sioux. They separated from this great nation for a trifle—a quarrel between two women, wives of the great chiefs. A buffalo had been found by these two women; each of them persisted in having the whole heart of the animal; from words they came to fisticuffs; and in their rage they used their nails and teeth. The two great chiefs had the folly to take part with their better-halves in the quarrel, and separated in lasting discontent. From that epoch the two tribes have been at war.

In this last short recital, I furnish your poets with materials for a new Iliad. The two great chiefs possessed, without doubt, names more sonorous than those of Achilles and Agamemnon. I leave you to continue the similitude.

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XIV.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Indian Question.

University of St. Louis, Dec. 30, 1854.

Reverend Father:

The "Indian Question" has been much agitated in the United States during the course of this year. Two great Territories, Kansas and Nebraska, will henceforth form a portion of the great Confederation. They embrace all that part of the wilderness included between the confines of the State of Missouri and the forty-ninth degree of north latitude, and extend westward to the summit of the Rocky Mountains.

Questions concerning the future of the Indians have frequently been laid before me by persons who appear interested in the destiny of these poor creatures. Knowing the affection and the interest which you, Reverend Father, entertain for them, I propose giving you my views and apprehensions in regard to them—views and apprehensions which I have long entertained. I have already said a few words on the subject, in a letter written in 1851, and inserted in the fortieth number of your *Précis Historiques*. In the course of that same year I received a letter from a much respected gentleman in Paris, who requested me to give him some details of the condition and present state of the Indian tribes of North America. I will give you in this letter the

questions of that correspondent, and my replies. I will add what has passed since; above all, the resolutions taken and the treaties concluded, from 1851 till December of the year 1854, between the American government and the aborigines.

First Question.—Do you think that the aborigines west of the Mississippi will be exterminated like those east of that river? In other words, will the Indians west of the Mississippi share the same fate as their brethren east of it?

Reply.—The same lot that the Indians east of the Mississippi have experienced, will at no distant day overtake those who dwell on the west of the same river. As the white population advances and penetrates into the interior, the aborigines will gradually withdraw. Already, even (in 1851), it is perceptible that the whites look with a covetous eye on the fertile lands of the Delawares, Potawatomies, Shawnees, and others on our frontiers, and project the organization of a new Territory—Nebraska. I should not be surprised if, in a few years, negotiations were entered upon for the purchase of those lands, and the removal of the Indians, who will be forced to retire further west. The great openings offered to emigration by the definitive arrangement of the "Oregon Question," as well as the acquisition of New Mexico, California, and Utah, have alone, thus far, hindered any efforts for extinguishing the Indian titles or rights to the lands situated immediately west of the State of Missouri, and those situated on the south side of the River Missouri, between the Rivers Kansas and Platte, and probably as high as the Niobrarah or *Eau-qui-court.*

Second Question.—In case the Indians, having formed a constitution for their own government, should find themselves in the territory of one of the United States of America, would there not be reason to fear that these rising communities would be treated with the same barbarity and

injustice as were the Cherokees, who, contrary to all equity, were deprived of their territory by the State of Georgia, and transported to the lands of Upper Arkansas?

Reply.—I answer in the affirmative. In a few years hence (1851), treaties will probably be concluded with those tribes for "reserves," that is to say, for portions of their lands set apart for their future residences. But, although the letter of the treaty guarantees them such "reserves," you may rest assured, that as soon as the necessities of a thriving white population will demand these lands, the whites will find pretexts for dispossessing the Indians. This is accomplished, either by negotiation or nominal purchase, or by rendering their situation so painful, that they find no alternative but a transfer or emigration.

Third and Fourth Questions.—When the Territory of Oregon is incorporated as one of the States of the Union, could not the missionaries of that region organize the converted tribes into districts and distinct counties, peopled with American citizens of Indian origin? Then the property of the Indians would become inviolable, and the missionaries would have time to persuade them to abandon their wandering, hunter life, and embrace the pastoral; after a time they would cultivate the soil, without being disturbed oy the pretensions of the whites.

Reply.—When Oregon takes her place as a State in the Union, she will follow the same policy that has been hitherto followed by the other States; that is, she will subject all the inhabitants to her jurisdiction and laws. The policy of the United States has ever been to remove the Indians from each new State as soon as it is admitted as a part of the Confederation; and in case portions of the tribes remain on their lands, as was the case in the States of New York, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio, the situation of the Indians is

extremely disagreeable, their progress very slow. Comparing themselves with the whites who surround them, and whom they see, ordinarily, so enterprising and industrious, they generally experience a sentiment of inferiority, which overwhelms and discourages them. The Stockbridges (Mohegans), who enjoyed, for several years, all the rights of citizens in the State of Wisconsin, petitioned the authorities to relieve them from their obligations as such, and earnestly solicited the government to grant them an abode, either in Minnesota or west of Missouri. Even those who live in the "reserves," fine sections of land granted and secured by special treaties, in Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio, finding themselves strangers on their native soil, sold all they had, and rejoined their tribes in the West. The neighborhood of the whites had become intolerable to them. When the lands of the Indians cease to be valuable, and the whites will and can do without them, then only will the Indians enjoy the privilege of retaining them.

Fifth Question.—The following is an extract from a law of the 27th of September, 1850: "It is granted to each inhabitant, or occupant of public land, including herein the half-breeds above eighteen years of age, citizens of the United States, or having made a declaration of intention to become citizens, or who shall make such declaration either before the 1st of December, 1851," &c. Remark that this law proves two things: first, that there are half-breeds in Oregon; second, that the half-breeds have the rights of white citizens. Do you not think that at some future day, say in the course of a century, Oregon will be peopled solely by a heterogeneous race, with striking traits of a mixed race of Indian and white blood, and a remnant of the aborigines in the defiles or valleys of the mountains, like the Celts of Scotland and the Araucanians of Chili? Then Oregon would enter

in the category of all the Spanish States of South America, in which the red men, far from being exterminated, have, on the contrary, used efforts to assimilate themselves to the whites.

Reply.—I answer to this last question, that in case the missionaries should collect the half-breeds with the most docile Indians, in districts or counties, under this territorial law of Oregon, and give the youth an education, both religious and agricultural, the result would be a greater mingling of Indian and white blood, and thus the future population of Oregon would be in some manner heterogeneous.

The future prospect of the Indian tribes is very dark and melancholy. Placed, as they are, under the jurisdiction of the United States, surrounded on every side by whites, their ruin appears certain. These savages disappear insensibly as the emigrations of the whites succeed each other and advance. In fifty years there will be few traces of the native races in the western portion of this hemisphere. Where are those powerful tribes which, at the commencement of this age, dwelt in the extensive and beautiful region, now divided among the States of the West? Remnants only exist on our western frontiers. In our own day the same causes are in full play, and produce the same effects. And for the last four years, the great tide of European emigration but makes the effect more certain. These emigrations multiply more and more in the present day, and succeed like the waves of ocean. They must find room; that room is the West.

Such are the responses which I gave in 1851 to M. D——. In the space of three years, what was simply an opinion has become a fact. My answer to the second question has been literally verified.

In the course of this year, 1854, treaties were concluded

with the Omahas, the Ottoes, and Missouris, the Sacs, the Foxes of Missouri, the Iowas, the Kicapoos, the Shawnees, and the Delawares, as well as with the Miamis, the Weas, the Piankeshaws, the Kaskaskias, and the Peorias. By these treaties, these different tribes cede to the United States the most extensive and most advantageous portions of their respective territories, and retain, as we have already said, but a limited and circumscribed demesne, termed a "reserve," for the wants of each particular tribe, and intended as their future residence.

We remark daily in the newspapers, that great numbers of emigrants are spreading already over the territories ceded; yet the conditions precedent of the treaties between the government and many of the tribes, expressly forbid the whites to settle there before the survey and sale of the lands to the profit of the Indians. Notwithstanding these conditions, the whites settle there, and even defy the authorities to deter them.

The new organization of the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska abrogates the protecting "intercourse laws." Thereby it has overthrown the feeble barrier which opposed the introduction of intoxicating liquors, which the inhabitants so expressively define by the term "Indian fire-water." In a few short years these little "reserves," or Indian settlements, will be surrounded by a white population; these whites, being for the most part vicious and corrupt, will introduce and furnish liquors in abundance, in order to satisfy the depraved taste of the Indian. In all this the sole object is to deprive these unfortunate men of all that remains to them in land and money. In this position of affairs, I cannot conceive how the Indians can be protected against the dangerous influences which will inevitably surround them on all sides. Ere long (perhaps by the close of 1856)

the delegates of the Territory of Kansas will knock at the door of Congress for admittance into the Union. If this request be granted, we may at once bid farewell to the independence of the Indians and the maintenance of their "reserves." The new State will directly establish her jurisdiction over all the inhabitants found within her limits. Although the Indians appear to be necessarily protected by the general stipulations accorded on the part of the government itself, constant experience demonstrates that they cannot exist within the limits of a State, unless they become citizens thereof. Witness the Creeks and Cherokees in the State of Georgia, who at one time were on the point of bringing the General Government and the State into conflict.

In several of the late treaties that I have mentioned, the Indians have renounced their permanent annuities, and, in exchange, have consented to accept considerable sums for a limited number of years, and payments at fixed terms. However liberal be the annuity, the Indian never lays any thing aside for his future necessities: this is his character. He lives from day to day. All is expended in the course of the year in which the payment is made. Let us suppose, therefore, that the amount of the last payment has been poured forth, what will consequently become of those poor tribes? Here, it appears to me, is the solution of the problem: they must either perish miserably, or sell their reserves, or go and rejoin the wandering bands of the plains, or cultivate the soil. But, observe well, they are surrounded by whites who contemn them, hate them, and who will demoralize them in a very short time. If it be asked, to what must be attributed the improvidence of the tribes, which neglect to exhange their permanent annuities for sums to be paid at limited terms, but of greater length? The reason is found in the disparity of the parties who make the treaty.

On one side stands a shrewd and, perhaps, unscrupulous government officer; on the other, a few ignorant chiefs, accompanied by their half-breed interpreters, whose integrity is far from being proverbial.

Adding to these facts the ravages caused every year by the small-pox, the measles, the cholera, and other maladies, as well as their incessant wars and divisions, I think I may repeat the melancholy foresight, that, in a few years, there will remain but very feeble vestiges of those tribes in the reserves guaranteed to them by the late treaties. At this moment the agents continue to make new treaties, by which the government proposes to purchase the lands of the Osages, Potawatomies, and several other tribes.

Since the discovery of America the system of removing and of exiling the Indians further inland or in the interior, has been assiduously exercised by the whites in this portion of the continent. In the early times, they went by slow degrees; but as the European colonies multiplied and increased in power, the system has been pushed with more vigor. At present, this same policy marches with gigantic steps. Resistance on the part of the natives but hastened their ruin. The drama of population reaches its last scene at the east and west bases of the Rocky Mountains. In a few years the curtain will fall over the Indian tribes and veil them forever. They will live only in history. The whites continue to spread like a torrent over California, over Washington, Utah, and Oregon; over the States of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Texas, and New Mexico; and lastly, over Kanzas and Nebraska.*

* On the 1st of August, 1854, in the Territories of Kanzas and Nebraska, there was not a town or village of whites. On the 30th of December, of the same year, thirty or forty sites had been chosen for building villages and towns without delay. Labor was begun at many

Within a recent period, and since I have resided in America, all these States and these Territories were still the exclusive domain of the Indians. As the whites settle and multiply in them, the Indians disappear, and seem to die out. The immense regions that I have just named include several millions of square miles.

Father Felix Martin wrote me recently from Canada: "The Indian Missions are reduced almost to nothing. They follow in the train of those sad tribes which are no more what they once were. It is like a body which gradually sinks in itself. It is losing its grandeur, its force, its primitive forms. They have lost the character of nations; they are individualities, with some ancient traditions, and even these traces are gradually becoming effaced."

If the poor and unfortunate inhabitants of the Indian Territory were treated with more justice and good faith, they would cause little trouble. They complain, and doubtless, justly, of the dishonesty of the whites. These banish them from their native soil, from the tombs of their fathers, to which they are devotedly attached, and from their ancient hunting and fishing grounds: they must consequently seek what is wrested from them, and build their cabins in another and a strange clime. But they are scarcely at ease in their new abode when they are removed a second and third time. With each successive emigration, they find their grounds restricted, their hunts and fishing-places less abundant. Yet, in all the treaties, the agents promise them, on the part of the President, whom they call their Great Father, protection and privileges that are never realized. Is it, therefore, astonishing that the savages give the whites the name of forked-

---

points; houses are building, farms laid out. All is life and activity in these virgin territories.

tongues, or liars? They say that the whites "march in winding tracks to attain their objects;" that their declarations of friendship, all beautiful and favorable as they appear, "never entered their hearts," and pass, ever with the same facility, "from the end of the tongue;" that they approach the Indian, "a smile on their lips," take him by the hand, to deceive him more easily, inebriate him, and corrupt his children. "Like serpents," said Black-Hawk, in his famous speech, "they have glided in among us; they have taken possession of our hearth-stones. The opossum and the deer have disappeared at their approach. We are overwhelmed with misery. The very contact of the whites has poisoned us."

These complaints and lamentations have been a thousand times repeated, in vain, in the speeches of the Indian orators, when the agents of the United States government endeavor to make propositions for the purchase of their lands. A feeble ray of hope for the preservation of a great number of Indians is left, if the law proposed by Senator Johnson is adopted in sincerity on both sides, by the government and by the Indians. Mr. Johnson proposes to establish three territorial governments in the Indian Territory inhabited by the Choctaws, Creeks, Cherokees, the Chickasaws, and other tribes, with the provision of being admitted later as distinct members of the Confederated United States. On the 25th of last November, Harkins, chief among the Choctaws, addressed a speech on this subject to his nation, assembled in council. Among other things, he said to them: "I appeal to you, what will become of us if we reject the proposition of Senator Johnson? Can we hope to remain a people, always separate and distinct? This is not possible. The time must come; yes, the time is approaching, in which we shall be swallowed up; and that, notwithstanding our just claims!

I speak boldly. It is a fact; our days of peace and happiness are gone, and forever. No opposition, on our part, can ever arrest the march of the United States towards grandeur and power, nor hinder the entire occupation of the vast American continent. We have no power nor influence over the most minute project of this government. It looks upon and considers us in the light of little children, as pupils under its tutelage and protection; it does with us as seems to it good. Can the Choctaws change the face of things? If the desire of life is not extinct in our hearts; if we will preserve among us the rights of a people, one sole means remains to us: it is to instruct and civilize the youth, promptly and efficaciously. The day of fraternity has arrived. We must act together, and by common consent. Let us attentively consider our critical situation, and the course now left us. One false step may prove fatal to our existence as a nation. I therefore propose that the council take this subject into consideration, and that a committee be named by it to discuss and deliberate on the advantages and disadvantages of the proposition made to the Choctaws. Is it just and sage for the Choctaws to refuse a liberal and favorable offer, and expose themselves to the destiny of the Indians of Nebraska?"

According to news received recently, through a journa published in the Indian country, the speech of the chief ha produced a profound impression, and was loudly applaude by all the counsellors. All the intelligent Choctaws approv the measure. The Protestant missionaries oppose the bil and employ all their artifices and influence to prevent its success. Harkins proposes their expulsion. "It is our money," said he, "that these mercenaries come here to get. Surely, our money can get us better teachers. Let us, therefore, try to procure good missionaries, with whom we

can live in harmony and good understanding; who will give us the assurance that their doctrine is based on that of the apostles and of Jesus Christ."

The Chickasaws are represented as opposed to Senator Johnson's measure. We trust, however, that the vote of the majority will prove favorable, and that the three territorial States will be established. It is, in my opinion, a last attempt and a last chance of existence for the sad remnants of the poor Indians of America.

It is, I will say, if I may here repeat what I wrote in my second letter in 1853, their only remaining source of happiness: humanity and justice seem to demand it. If they are again repulsed, and driven inland, they will infallibly perish. Such as refuse to submit, and accept the definitive arrangement, the only favorable one left, must resume the nomade life of the praries, and close their career with the vanishing buffaloes and other animals.

I have the honor to be, Rev. Father,

Your very humble and devoted

Servant and brother in Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XV.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Watomika and the Delawares.

Cincinnati, College of St. Xavier, March 15, 1855.

Rev. and very dear Father:

I am sure you will be gratified to make the acquaintance of Watomika, the swift-footed, or *celeripes*. He is the son of a renowned warrior, chief of the nation of the Delawares, or Lenni-Lenapi, who formed one of the most powerful Indian nations at the epoch of the discovery of the American continent by Christopher Columbus. Later, I will speak to you of his early years; at present, I will inform you of the particulars attending his conversion to the true Faith.

Watomika received his education in a Calvinistic or Presbyterian college. He adopted the tenets of that sect in good faith. Naturally inclined to piety, he passed, daily, whole hours in the meditation and contemplation of heavenly things. He fasted regularly one day in the week, taking no nourishment until sunset. This kind of life was not relished by the disciples of Calvin, and Watomika frequently found himself the sport and butt of his youthful schoolmates.

After concluding his course of study, he resolved to become a minister. He prepared himself for this step with great assiduity; prayed more, and fasted more frequently. In proportion as he sought to understand and penetrate

point by point the doctrines of Calvin, there arose in his soul, doubt upon doubt, at the same time that he experienced a great interior commotion, which neither his prayers nor his fasts could allay. Frequently, in all the sincerity of his soul he entreated the Lord to enlighten his mind by heavenly truths, and grant him grace to understand them. He petitioned fervently, he knocked at the door courageously, and, like the widow in the Gospel, sought the lost treasure perseveringly. The ways of God are wonderful, and his aid is never invoked in vain. Watomika was sent as a preacher to St. Louis, to replace an absent brother in one of the houses of worship of his sect. One day, he was walking out to breathe the fresh air, and Providence conducted him into the street in which our church stands, and that at the moment, when the children were flocking in to catechism. He knew the word *Catholic* only by having heard it associated with the most absurd and inconsistent doctrines, which the sectaries insinuate with so much malice, audacity, and presumption, not only in their school-books, their Readers and Spellers, their works on Geography and History, but which they adroitly introduce into their prayer-books and works of piety. Watomika, therefore, only knew the Catholics through the prisms of falsehood and calumny. Attracted either by curiosity or by novelty, he entered the church with the children. A certain sentiment of respect seized him; he found it inexplicable. The altar, the cross, the images of the Blessed Virgin and of the Saints, emblems of faith, all spoke strongly to his eyes. The Holy of Holies, who dwells in his tabernacle, and of whose real presence he was ignorant, secretly touched his heart and inspired him with respect for his temple. He followed the catechetical instructions of the children with the greatest interest and liveliest attention. The instruction of Father D—— had

reference to several points, concerning which he had long and sincerely desired to be enlightened. He returned home, delighted and astonished at having found in a Catholic church a portion of the treasure that he had so long hitherto sought in vain. He afterwards had the courage to overcome his prejudices and repugnances, and have recourse to a priest—nay, to a Jesuit. He proposed to this religious, all his doubts, perplexities, and anxieties. In short, Watomika, a child of the forest, a worthy descendant of a powerful American race, abjured his errors, embraced our holy religion, and, some time after, enrolled himself among the followers of St. Ignatius. His scholasticate is nearly ended, at the moment in which I write these lines; Watomika will soon receive Holy Orders, to which he aspires with a devout ardor. This is sufficient on my part concerning Light-foot; let us now hear his own exposition of the religious ideas, traditions, manners, and customs of his tribe.

The name Delawares, that the Indians of his nation bear, was given them by the whites. It is derived from Lord Delaware, one of the early English colonial governors in America. Among themselves these people are called Lenni-Lenapi, or "the primitive nation." They resided anciently in a great country west of the Mississippi. With the "Five Nations," so renowned in the Indian history of this continent, they seized and occupied a large territory southeast of their ancient domain. In the course of this long migration, the Delawares divided into three great tribes, called the "Tortoise tribe," the "Turkey tribe," and the "Wolf tribe." In the time of William Penn, they occupied the whole of Pennsylvania, and extended from the Potomac to the Hudson. As the white population began to increase, strengthen, and extend over these vast territories, the Delawares (like all the other tribes) found it necessary to plunge deeper into the

forests, and yield to their conquerors or usurpers. While a great part of the nation established themselves on the Ohio, on the margin of the Muskingum, others regained the shores and the forests of the Mississippi, whence, according to their traditions, their ancestors had set forth. When colonies of Europeans came to take possession of that large and handsome river, which the celebrated Father Marquette first discovered, and gave the now consoling and sublime name of the Immaculate Conception, they repulsed once more the Delawares, and Government granted these Indians a little territory southwest of Fort Leavenworth, on the Missouri. In the course of the year that has just closed (1854), the Delawares have ceded to the United States this last foothold.

These Indians had received from the President of the United States, whom they call their Great Father, the most formal assurances that their rights should be respected, and that he would see that all the conditions of the treaty were faithfully executed, viz., that the lands should be sold to the highest bidder, and exclusively to the profit of the nation. It was, therefore, very astonishing to the Delawares, immediately after the conclusion of the treaty, to find themselves invested on every side by the whites, who, disregarding the clauses of the treaty, seize all the sites favorable for towns, cities, villages, farms, and mill-seats, and declare that they will only pay a dollar and a quarter per acre! Will the Government yield to this?

The Delawares, or Lenni-Lenapi, believe that the Great Spirit first created the land and water, trees and plants, birds and fishes, animals and insects; in the last place, he created the first Lenap or Delaware. He placed a snail on the shore of a beautiful and large river, which took its source in a distant mountain, near the rising of the sun. After twelve moons, the snail produced a red-skinned man. The latter,

discontented with his solitary lot, made a bark canoe, and descended the river, in search of society. On the third day, at sunset, he met a beaver, which addressed him the following questions: "Who art thou? whence comest thou? whither art thou going?" The man answered: "The Great Spirit is my father. He gave me all the earth, with its rivers and its lakes, with all the animals which roam over the plains and forests, the birds which fly in the air, and the fishes that swim in the sea." The beaver, surprised and irritated by so much audacity and presumption, imposed silence on him, and commanded him to quit his domain without delay. An animated and noisy quarrel took place between the man and the beaver, who defended his liberty and rights. The beaver's only daughter, frightened at the noise, quitted her abode and placed herself between the man and her father (ready to tear each other in pieces), entreating them, by the mildest and most conciliating words to cease their dispute.

As the snow melts at the approach of the sun's benignant rays, as the turbulent waters of cascades and waterfalls run on then peaceably and clear, as calm succeeds to tempest, so, to the voice of the young child, the anger of the stranger and the wrath of his adversary gave place to a profound and eternal friendship; they embraced affectionately. To render the union more durable and more intimate, the man asked the beaver's daughter for a companion. After a moment's reflection, the latter presented her to him, saying: "It is the decree of the Great Spirit, I cannot oppose it; take my daughter, cherish and protect her. Go in peace!" The man, with his wife, continued his voyage to the mouth of the river. There, at the entrance of a meadow enamelled with flowers and surrounded with fruit-trees of all kinds, in the midst of animals and birds of every kind, he chose his abode

and arranged his wigwam. From this union sprang a numerous family: they are called the Lenni-Lenapi, that is to say, the primitive family, or the ancient people, at the present day known under the name of Delawares.

The Delawares believe in the existence of two Great Spirits, that they call *Waka-Tanka* and *Waka-Cheeka;* that is, the Good Spirit and the Bad Spirit, to which all the manitous, or inferior spirits, whether good or wicked, must render homage and obedience.

According to their religious code, there is a future state. It consists in a place of pleasure and repose, where the prudent in council, intrepid and courageous warriors, indefatigable hunters, and the kind and hospitable man, will obtain an eternal recompense; and a place of horrors for the wicked, for the *forked tongues*, or liars, for the slothful and indolent. They call the first place *Wak-an-da*, or country of life, and the other, *Yoon-i-un-guch*, or devouring and insatiable gulf which never gives up its prey.

They say that the country of life is an island of ravishing beauty and of great extent. A lofty mountain rises majestically in the centre, and on the summit of this mountain is the abode of the Great Spirit. Thence he contemplates at once the extent of his vast domain; the courses of the thousand rivers, clear as crystal, which extend through it like so many transparent threads, adorning the shady forests, the plains enamelled with flowers, and the tranquil lakes, which reflect continually the beneficent rays of a glorious sun. Birds of the handsomest plumage fill these forests with their sweet melodies. The noblest animals,—bisons, elk, deer, goats, big-horns,—graze peaceably in these smiling, handsome, and luxuriant plains. The lakes are never agitated either by wind or tempest; and slime nor mire can never mingle with the limpid waters of their streams. Aquatic

birds, the otter, the beaver, and fishes abound in them. The sun illumines the country of life: in it, eternal spring reigns. The blessed souls who are admitted within its realms, resume all their strength and are preserved from all diseases; they experience no fatigue in the chase or in other agreeable exercises that the Great Spirit allows them, and have no necessity for repose.

The *Yoon-i-un-guch*, on the contrary, which environs the country of life, is a broad and deep water; it presents at once a terrible succession of cataracts and yawning gulfs, in which the roaring of the waves is frightful. There, on the top of an immense rugged rock, which rises above the loftiest and most turbulent waves, is the residence of the spirit of evil. As a fox lies in wait,—as a vulture ready to dart upon its prey,—Waka-Cheeka watches the passage of souls, conducting to the country of life. This passage is so narrow, that only one soul at a time can possibly occupy the bridge which composes it. The bad spirit presents himself under the most hideous form, and attacks each soul in its turn. The cowardly, indolent soul immediately betrays its baseness, and prepares for flight; but at the same instant, Cheeka seizes it, and precipitates it into the open gulf, which never yields up its victim.

Another version says, that the Great Spirit has suspended a bunch of beautiful red bay-berries about the middle of the bridge, in order to try the virtue of those who cross it in their voyage to the country of life.

The Indian that has been active and indefatigable in the chase, or courageous and victorious in war, is not attracted by the tempting fruit; he continues his onward progress without attending to it. On the contrary, the indolent and cowardly soul, tempted by the fascinating bays, stops, and stretches out his hand to seize it; but instantly the timber

which forms the bridge sinks heavily beneath his feet; he falls, and is lost forever in the dire abyss.

The Delawares believe that the existence of good and evil spirits dates back to so remote an epoch that it is impossible for man to conceive its commencement; that these spirits are immutable, and that death has no empire over them; they created the manitous, or inferior spirits, who enjoy, like themselves, immortality. They attribute to the good spirit all earthly blessings: light, the heat of the sun, health, the varied and beneficent productions of nature, their success in war or in the chase, &c. From the wicked spirit proceed all contradictions and misfortunes, darkness, cold, failure in hunting and war, hunger, thirst, old age, sickness, and death. The manitous cannot of themselves do either good or evil; for they are only the faithful mediators of the great spirits, for the execution of their orders and their designs.

They believe the soul is material, although invisible and immortal. They say that the soul does not quit the body immediately after death, but that these two parts of man descend into the grave, where they remain together during several days, sometimes during weeks and months. After the soul has left the tomb, it retards anew its departure for a time, before it is capable of breaking the bonds which have so intimately attached it to the body on earth. It is on account of this strong attachment, this intimate union between the body and the soul, that the Indians paint and carefully adorn the body before interring it, and place provisions, arms, and utensils in the tomb. This custom is not only a last duty of respect paid to the dead, but at the same time a profession of their belief that the soul will appear under the same form in the "country of life," if it be so happy as to attain it. They are convinced that the utensils, arms, and

provisions, are indispensable to the soul in traversing the long and dangerous trip which leads to the "island of happiness."

Watomika, of whom I have spoken, assured me that he daily placed a favorite dish on the tomb of his father, during a whole month, persuaded each time that the food had disappeared,—that the soul of the departed had accepted the viand. He never discontinued repeating this last testimony of filial love and fidelity to the manes of his father, whom he tenderly loved, until a dream assured him that that soul so dear had entered the "regions of life," and was in the enjoyment of all the favors, and all the advantages that the Great Spirit grants so liberally to those who have faithfully accomplished their obligations on earth.

It is unnecessary to indicate to you the striking points of resemblance with several ancient traditions of religion. Although fabulous in several circumstances, this Indian narrative includes ideas on the creation, the terrestrial paradise, heaven and hell, angels and demons, &c.

The Lenni-Lenapi offer two kinds of sacrifice, namely, to the good spirit and to the evil spirit; that is to say, to Waka-Tanka and to Waka-Cheeka.

One of these ceremonies is performed in common, and the whole tribe or village take part in it; the other is private, one family or several households sharing in it. The solemnity of the general sacrifice takes place in the spring of the year. It is made to obtain the benedictions of Waka-Tanka on the entire nation, that the earth may be rendered fruitful, the hunting-grounds abound with animals and birds, and the rivers and lakes crowded with fish. This particular sacrifice comprehends all the sacrifices which take place in certain circumstances and in certain seasons of the year. They are offered to either the good or evil spirit, for ob-

taining personal favors, or preservation from all accidents and misfortunes.

Before the great feast or annual sacrifice, the great chief convenes his council. It is composed of inferior chiefs, of senior warriors who have taken scalps in war, and jugglers or medicine-men. They deliberate on the proper time and suitable place for the sacrifice. The decision is proclaimed by the orators to the assembled tribe. Immediately every individual begins taking his measures, and making his preparations for assisting worthily at the festival and giving brilliancy to the ceremonies.

About ten days previous to the solemnity, the principal jugglers, to whom the arrangement of the ceremonies has been confided, blacken their foreheads with powdered charcoal mixed with grease; this is their token of mourning and penance. They retire, either into their own lodges, or into the most hidden and inaccessible thicknesses of the neighboring forests. Alone, they pass the time in silence, in juggleries, and in superstitious practices; they observe a most rigorous fast, and often pass ten days in a complete abstinence, without partaking of the least nourishment.

In the mean time the medicine-lodge is erected in its widest dimensions. Every one contributes to it whatever he possesses of value, or that he considers precious, to serve as ornaments on this grand occasion.

On the day named, early in the morning, the chiefs, followed by the medicine-men and all the people, each in full costume and carefully painted with different colors, march in procession to the lodge, and participate in a religious banquet hastily prepared. During the repast, the orators make their customary discourses; these turn principally upon all the events of the year just elapsed, and on the success obtained, or the misfortunes experienced.

After the banquet a fire is kindled in the centre of the lodge. Twelve stones, each one weighing three pounds, are placed before the fire and heated to redness. The victim, which is a white dog, is presented to the jugglers by the great chief, accompanied by all his grave counsellors. The sacrificant, or master of ceremonies, attaches the animal to the medicine-post, consecrated to this use, and painted red. After making his supplications to Waka-Tanka, he immolates the victim with a single blow, tears out his heart, and divides it into three equal parts. At the instant they draw from the fire the twelve red-hot stones and arrange them in three heaps, on each of which the sacrificant places a piece of the heart enveloped in the leaves of the kinekinic,* or sumac.

While these pieces are consuming, the jugglers raise with one hand their idols, and holding in the other a gourd filled with little stones, they beat the measure, dance, and thus surround the smoking sacrifice. At the same time they implore the Waka-Tanka to grant them a liberal share of blessings.

After the heart and the leaves are entirely consumed, the ashes are collected in a beautiful doeskin, ornamented with beads and embroidered with porcupine, and presented to the sacrificant. This last immediately goes forth from his lodge, preceded by four masters of ceremonies, bearing the skin, and followed by the whole band of jugglers. After haranguing the multitude in the most flattering terms, he divides the ashes of the sacrifice into six portions. He casts the first towards heaven, and entreats the Good Spirit to

* The Kinekinic (Sasakkomenah, in Ojibway) is a shrub of the genus Rhus. The Indians generally use the leaves to mix with tobacco when they smoke.

grant them his blessings; he spreads the second on the earth, to obtain from it an abundance of fruits and of roots. The remaining four portions are offered to the four cardinal points. "From the east the light of day (the sun) is granted them. The west sends them the greatest abundance of showers, which fertilize the plains and forests, and supply with water the springs, and those rivers and lakes which furnish them with fish. The north, with its snows and ice, facilitates to them the operations of the chase; the hunters can in the cold season, with more ease and security, follow the tracks of the animals. In the spring the southern gales call forth the new verdure, blossoms, and fruits; it is the season when all the wild animals bring forth their young, that they may feed on the fresh herbage, and the tender branches of trees and shrubs." The sacrificant implores all the elements to be propitious. Finally, he addresses the medicine-men, thanking them for all that they have done to obtain the assistance and favor of Waka-Tanka in the course of the ensuing year. Then the whole assembly shout joyfully their approbation, and withdraw to their wigwams, to pass the remainder of the day in feasting and dancing. The white dog is carefully prepared and cooked. Each member of the confraternity of jugglers receives his portion in a wooden dish, and is bound to eat the whole (excepting the bones). This repast terminates the grand festival and the annual banquet.

The difference between the particular and the general sacrifice consists in this,—the heart of any other animal may be offered to the good spirit by one juggler only, and in presence of one single individual, or of one or several families, in favor of whom the offering is made.

When any misfortune happens to one or to several families, they immediately address the chief of the jugglers, imparting

to him their afflictions and difficulties. This communication is made in the most submissive terms, in order to obtain his intercession and his aid. He at once invites three individuals among the initiated to deliberate together on the affair in question. After the customary incantations and juggleries, the chief rises and makes known the causes of the anger of Waka-Cheeka. They then go to the lodge, prepared for the sacrifice; kindle a large fire in it, and continue according to the ritual of the grand sacrifice. The jugglers endeavor to render themselves as hideous as possible, painting their faces and bodies, and wearing the most fantastical accoutrements. Undoubtedly they wish to resemble more closely (at least in the exterior) the hideous and evil spirit whom they serve, and thus obtain his favors.

The unhappy suppliants are then introduced into the lodge and present the sacrificant the entrails of a crow, by way of offering. They place themselves opposite the jugglers. The red-hot stones, mounted in one heap, consume the entrails, wrapped in the leaves of kinekinic, or sumac. The chief secretly draws from his sack of juggleries, which contains his idols and other superstitious objects, a bear's tooth, and hides it in his mouth. Then he covers his right eye with his hand, moans and shrieks, as though he were undergoing the greatest sufferings and the most excruciating agony. This play continues some moments. He pretends to draw the tooth from his eye, and presents it triumphantly to his credulous clients, making them believe that the anger of Waka-Cheeka is appeased. If the affair is very important, the jugglers often receive several horses, or other objects of value, and all retire satisfied and joyous.

F J De Smet, S. J.

Letter XVI.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PRÉCIS HISTORIQUES, BRUSSELS.

Kistalwa and Maria, parents of Watomika.

NAMUR, January 30, 1857.

REV. AND DEAR FATHER:

I narrated to you, in one of my letters, the conversion of Watomika (Light-foot) and his vocation to the religious state. A short notice concerning his parents will interest you.

Watomika was born in the village of Muskagola, in Indian Territory. His father, called Kistalwa, the Runner of the Mountain-path, was grandson of Hobokou, or the Tobacco-pipe, a distinguished chief and warrior of the tribe of Delawares, or Lenni-Lenapi, which figure worthily in the Indian history of the United States. Ketchum, his cousin, is the actual chief of the Delawares, and the successor of Kistalwa.

During the last fifteen years of his life, Kistalwa exercised the functions of great chief. On many an occasion, he proved by his boldness, while hunting the bear, tiger, and buffalo, and especially by his bravery in war, that he was worthy at once of the high position which he occupied in his nation, and of the title of descendant of a long succession of chiefs and illustrious warriors. Educated in the superstitions of paganism, Kistalwa was ignorant of the Christian religion. He saw in the whites who visited his tribe, naught but usurpers of the lands of his ancestors, who continually pushed them into unexplored wilds; but government agents,

who, little by little, and in proportion as it extended its vast empire, would succeed in exterminating the whole Indian race. He saw them introducing themselves among them—men, who, under the appearance of friendship, extended the hand, addressed them kind and flattering words, encouraged the Indian to drink fire-water (as the latter call liquors), inebriated them, in order the better to deceive them in their infamous traffic, and fomented the most abject vices. He was witness of the fatal influences that these perverse and hypocritical men exerted in the tribe. Is it then surprising that he hated not only those individuals, but even the religion to which they pretended to belong, even the very name of Christian, which they presumed to bear? Like the aged Hamilcar, father of Hannibal, Kistalwa never ceased to inspire the young Watomika with an eternal hatred towards the treacherous white race.

The mother of Watomika was of French orign. According to the accounts of this woman, her parents came from the province of Auvergne, and, after crossing the ocean, they settled in a rich and lovely valley, on the shores of the Rio-Frio, a tributary of the Nueces, in Texas, which then formed a part of Mexico. Green plains, with which the valley abounded, served as pasturage to countless troops of wild cattle and thousands of wild horses. The Comanches, not less savage and wandering, came there from time to time to make their great hunt, and provide themselves with those impetuous coursers, which render them the terror of their enemies in war. Here Maria, mother of Watomika, was born. She had a brother, called Louis, three years older, and born in France.

Days, months, even years, rolled on, without the peace of the solitary cottage of the intrepid Frenchman, as he was denominated, ever being disturbed. He had no other neigh-

bors than the wandering savages, who, at certain seasons of the year, visited him, testified much friendship and attachment for him, and bringing him their peltry and provisions, received in exchange those articles which were suited to their wants or would afford them pleasure. This little family, so tranquil, so happy in the lonely wild, sheltered from those political commotions, from those furious tempests which arise and scatter fear, disorder, and ruin into the most charming provinces of fair France, their native country—the Bucheur family, remote from those tragical and bloody spectacles, believed they had found repose in the solitude, far from the confusions and vicisitudes of which they had been witness in the last century. But, alas! the dreams of life are very deceitful, and often very short! The visions of man's imagination here below are illusory and uncertain. Passing for the greater part with the speed of lightning, they dazzle but an instant. The intrepid Frenchman counted upon a long continuance of happy years. Eight years had already elapsed, and peace and happiness ever reigned in his little household. The savages appeared to be sincerely attached to him; he was their friend, their benefactor; he thought himself securely sheltered from all danger on their part.

Suddenly, an unforeseen event annihilated his fondest hopes. A little party of Comanche hunters were massacred by some Spaniards on the Rio Grande. Instantly the cry of war and of vengeance resounded in all the camps of the tribe. The Indian warriors already scour the plains and the forests, in search of the scalps of the white man, and eager to drench their hands in his blood. They had sought in vain for weeks, when the remembrance of the solitary of the Rio Frio presented itself to the thought of one soldier of the band. He proposed the blow; it was accepted. In their

frenzied rage they forgot the benevolence and friendship of which they had continually received proofs in the cabin of the honest Frenchman, and of his faithful companion. They even forgot the innocent caresses of the two little children.

Favored by the darkness of night, they approached this peaceful dwelling. While the whole family were buried in a profound slumber, the war-whoop of the barbarians aroused them. Armed with clubs, the aggressors burst in the doors, and ere the family had time to recover from their panic, they seized the father, mother, and the children. They led them to a little distance from the house, so that they might themselves be the melancholy witnesses of the destruction by fire of all that the savages could not transport.

This was only the commencement of their misfortunes. The wrath and revenge of the Indians, inflamed by all the injuries received from some whites, was, in the absence of the really culpable, to fall upon these innocent victims. They loaded them with opprobrium and overwhelmed them with cruelties. After a precipitate and painful march, continued during several days, almost without being able to take the least repose, and with very little food, they arrived at the village of the great Comanche chief, a near relation of the hunters massacred by the Spaniards.

The camp was warned beforehand of the approach of the warriors. They were received with all the honors of a real triumph, consisting in scalp-dances, songs, and festivals, as if these miserable wretches had actually distinguished themselves by a heroic action and in battle array. While the council was sitting in the lodge of the chief, in order to deliberate on the lot of the prisoners, these last were conducted all around the village, amid the most atrocious injuries which each barbarian had the right to inflict on them. The chief at last proclaimed the sentence, which was heard and ac-

cepted with loud acclamations. The post was immediately erected in the camp and surrounded with fagots. The Frenchman and his wife were fastened to it together, in order that they might perish in the flames. The savage dances, the frenzied gestures, the cries, vociferations, and howlings of these infuriated barbarians, augmented the deep anguish and horrible agony of their unfortunate victims. The father and mother never ceased, until their latest breath, conjuring their cruel executioners to take pity on their poor, innocent children. Little Louis and Maria were spared, on account of their infant years. The former was ten years of age; the girl was only seven. They were, however, forced to witness the sacrifice of their beloved parents, whom they could neither deliver nor comfort. They trembled in every limb, shed torrents of tears, called their father and mother by their sweetest names, and supplicated, but in vain, those cruel and merciless hearts to spare their lives. The moaning of the father, amid his cruel tortures, and the agonizing shrieks of the dying mother, rent the hearts of these tender children. In their despair, they would have thrown themselves at their feet, heedless of the flames, if the monsters that surrounded them had not opposed them.

Immediately after this tragical and shocking scene, the two unhappy orphans were subjected to a new trial, not less hard and afflicting in the melancholy circumstances in which they found themselves. Hitherto they had passed together the innocent and joyous days of their childhood; they shared each other's sports, and made little excursions together: now that their tender hearts wished to sympathize in this bitter trial, they were pitilessly separated, never to see each other again on earth. The only son of a chief who was present had lately fallen in war. This chief claimed Louis, to take the place of his son, put him on a beautiful horse, and con-

ducted him to his country. From that time they have never heard of him. If he still lives, he probably now replaces his adopted father as Comanche chief, and wanders with his red brothers in the boundless prairies of Texas, New Mexico, and the Great Desert. Maria was adopted in the family of a great Comanche warrior, who treated her as his own child, and who resumed, soon after, the trail leading to his own country, situated to the north of Texas. She passed seven years in this family, when she accompanied her Indian parents to a trading-post, established in the upper part of Red River. They there met a great party of Delawares, led forth by the young and brave Kistalwa, son of Buckongohela. The two companies at once paid the customary compliments, and smoked the calumet of peace and of fraternity.

Maria attracted the attention of the Delaware party, especially of Kistalwa, who conversed with her. She consented to accompany him to the lodge of Buckongohela, provided her adopted parents gave their approbation. Kistalwa hastened to propose the matter to the old Comanche. The latter, surprised, rejected the proposition with severity, and refused, positively, to hear it mentioned. He even took steps to prevent any interview between the young Delaware and his adopted daughter. Kistalwa was firm; he did not suffer himself to be easily intimidated, and this first refusal only served to encourage him to persist in his request, at every hazard. The history of the young white girl had deeply touched his heart. He determined absolutely to take her, to tear her, if necessary, from one of the tormentors of her unfortunate father and mother. He, therefore, returned to the charge with such determination, and with such positive arguments, that the Comanche began to reflect on the consequences of a second refusal, and to tremble for the security of his whole family. The affair assumed a new aspect;

the old Indian lent a more attentive ear to the discourse of the youthful warrior. Kistalwa perceived it, and immediately put his calumet and tobacco at his feet. According to Indian usages, if the adverse party pays no attention to the calumet, it is a sign that he refuses all arrangement. But the Comanche, to the perfect delight of his guest, hastened to light the calumet, and offered it to the Great Spirit and to all the manitous in his calendar, as a token of his sincerity. The calumet then passed from mouth to mouth, as in conclusion of the treaty. The one promised his daughter; the other, in testimony of his gratitude, made a present to the father of two splendid horses and an ample supply of tobacco and of munitions.

Kistalwa soon made his preparations for departure, and caused the white girl to be informed of his intentions. She found it difficult to quit her Comanche parents, to whom she was sincerely attached. Maria, by her mildness, her intelligence, and her other good qualities, which distinguished her from her companions, had won every heart in the Comanche family. They, on their side, had manifested towards Maria, during her long sojourn in their lodge, all the respect and affection of real brothers and sisters. The separation was therefore painful; and their mutual grief was evidenced by an abundance of tears in exchanging the last farewell. Hence, in bidding adieu to Maria, the old Comanche implored his manitous to protect the path through which she would pass: having placed her under their safeguard, he committed her into the hands of Kistalwa and his band of warriors.

Proud of the treasure which they took with them, they resumed, as if in triumph, the way to their own country. The sun shone, the plains abounded with animals, the chase was successful, no enemy disputed their passage, all was propitious and happy during their long journey.

Maria, at her arrival among the Lenni-Lenapi, henceforward her own nation, was received there with every mark of tenderness and affection by the great chief Buckongohela. He gave her the name of Monotawan, or the White Antelope, on account of her delicate form and her exceedingly fair complexion.

Two years after, Monotawan was married to Kistalwa, with the ceremonies and rites used in that tribe. The following are the details of this kind of solemnity: when a young man desires to marry, he declares his intention to the father and mother of the young person of his choice, if they are living, if not, to the nearest relations and friends. These decide on the suitableness of the marriage. The young man then takes his gun, his shot-pouch, and his powder-horn, and passes three consecutive days in pursuit of game in the neighboring forests and plains. If he obtains success and returns with his horses laden with the products of the chase, it is a certain presage of happiness and peace in the new state which he is about to enter; if, on the contrary, he returns to the lodge with empty hands or with poor game, the augury is unfavorable, and the friends often defer the marriage to a more propitious time. The hunter, on his return, chooses the most delicate specimens of his game, places them at the entrance of the wigwam of his intended, and then retires without saying a word to any one whomsoever. When the present is accepted, it is a sign that no objection exists on the part of the family or friends to the projected union. Without delay the betrothed make all the preparations which prelude the marriage. The young man and young woman carefully paint their faces with different colors and devices, and adorn themselves with their finest ornaments. These last consist in bracelets, necklaces of glass and porcelain beads, handsome birds'-feathers,

habits of antelope and buck skins, richly embroidered and worked with porcupine-quills of various tints. The bride-groom ties fox and wolf tails around his heels and knees in the fashion of garters, and inserts feathers of the eagle's tail in his hair—the last are marks of great distinction. The principal jugglers make an offering of tobacco to Waka-Tanka, or the Great Spirit, in order to obtain his favors for the young couple, and present him a beaver-skin in sacrifice, as a mark of their gratitude for the future blessings which they implore for them. The friends and near relations prepare the grand marriage-feast together. There the young man is presented to the family by the great master of ceremonies. He places a beaver-skin in the hand of each of the betrothed. They exchange these between them, and thus ratify their consent to the marriage. The repast commences, the guests do honor to the viands, they dance and sing to the drum and the flute, and amid these amusements and the recitation of interesting tales, terminates the nuptial ceremony among the Lenni-Lenapi.

Monotawan became the mother of two sons; the elder was called Chiwendota or the Black Wolf, the junior received the name of Watomika or the Light-foot.

Please accept my best respects, and believe me,

Your devoted brother in Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XVII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Fire-worship.

St. Louis, November 14, 1857.

Rev. and very dear Father:

The ancient worship of fire exists among our Indians from time immemorial. It is found in their traditions, as in the history of almost all the nations which have had temples and altars in which was a pyre, a hearth, a brasier, in order to entertain continually the fire used in their sacrifices. The Greeks adored fire under the name of Haitos, and the Latins under the name of Vesta. Father Charlevoix represents the tribes of Louisiana, and especially the ancient tribe of the Natchez, as keeping up a perpetual fire in all their medicine lodges or temples. Among the Moquis of New Mexico the sacred fire is constantly maintained by aged men. They believe that great misfortunes will afflict the whole tribe should the fire be extinguished.

The superstitious devotion to fire was general among the Mexicans at the period of the Conquest. In a book entitled, *Inie Calotle in Ilhuicac*, or *Way to Heaven*, printed in 1607 and 1612, we see that each one of the eighteen months of the Mexican year was consecrated to a particular divinity, honored by festivals more or less solemn, and almost always by human sacrifices.

The first month, which begun on the second of February,

was consecrated to *Altachuala*, god of the *detention of waters;* the second, to *the destroying god of nations;* the third, to the *god of the waters;* the fourth, to the *god of maize;* the fifth, falling about Easter, to the god *Tezcatlipoca*, which was the Jupiter of the Romans; the ninth was consecrated to the *god of war.*

The tenth month, called *Xocolh-huetzi*, began on the 4th of August. Then took place the great feast of the god of fire, or *Xuchten-hetli*, with numerous human sacrifices. They thrust living men into the flames. When these were half burnt, but still alive, they tore out the heart, in presence of the image of the god. Then they planted in the middle of the court of the temple a lofty tree, around which they performed a thousand ceremonies and sacrifices worthy of the founder of this feast. It lasted longer than the others.

In the eleventh month falls the festival of *Toci*, mother of the gods; on the twelfth, that of the *Coming of the gods;* on the thirteenth, the *Feasts upon the mountains;* the fifteenth month was reserved to the god of war, and the seventeenth to the god of the rains.

The 12th of January commenced, with the eighteenth month, called *Itzcali*, another feast of fire. Two days previous (the 10th), in the middle of the night, they kindled the *new fire* before the idol of the god, elegantly ornamented. With this fire they lighted a grand pile. The hunters brought all that they had killed or fished from the waters, and presented it to the priest, who cast it into the furnace. Then all the assistants were obliged to eat very hot the *tamalillos*, that is to say, little loaves of corn-meal containing a small portion of roasted meat. What was most singular in this festival, is that, three successive years, no human victim was immolated, and the fourth year, the number of victims surpassed that of other feasts. The king in person and

the lords presented themselves in the midst of this heap of corpses to dance, and all sung, with respect and solemnity, the *reserved chant*, which they call in their language, *Neteuhicuicaliztli.*

In a *Treatise on the Idolatry and Superstitions of the Mexicans*, a manuscript of 1629, we perceive that what particularly attracted the veneration of the Mexicans was fire. For this reason this element presided at the birth, and at almost all the actions of life among these victims of error. The infant was born in this superstition. At the moment of its birth, fire was kindled in the room of the mother, and it was maintained four consecutive days, without removing any of it. They believed that if the live coals were drawn out, a cloud would suddenly appear over the eye of the newly born. On the fourth day, the elders took the child and the fire out of the chamber; then they passed the fire four times around the child's head, twice in one direction and twice in its opposite. Then the new-born infant received its name, which was in general that of the animal or of the element to which its birthday was consecrated,—as the alligator, the serpent, the tiger, the eagle, etc.; or the water, the fire, the house, etc.

In the different sacrifices, tapers and incense almost always had a share.

We also find among them a mythological recital, which shows that a personage, formerly covered with leprosy, obtained the empire of the future world, for having passed by the ordeal of fire, and was transformed into the sun, to the great disappointment of other great personages who shrank from the test. Is this the cause of their respect for fire, and the reason why they attribute to it a mysterious power? The Potawatomies say that Chipiapoos, or the *Dead-man*, is the grand manitou that presides in the country of souls and

there maintains the sacred fire, for the happiness of all those of his race who arrive there. I have spoken of it in my "*Oregon Missions*," p. 285.*

Fire is, in all the Indian tribes that I have known, an emblem of happiness or of good fortune. It is kindled before all their deliberations. "Having extinguished the enemy's fire," signifies with them, to have gained the victory. They attribute to fire a sacred character, which is remarkable everywhere in their usages and customs, especially in their religious ceremonies. They generally maintain mysterious ideas concerning the substance and phenomena of fire, which they consider supernatural. To see a fire rising mysteriously, in their dreams or otherwise, is the symbol of the passage of a soul into the other world. Before consulting the manitous, or tutelary spirits, or before addressing the dead, they begin by kindling the sacred fire. This fire must be struck from a flint, or reach them mysteriously by lightning, or in some other way. To light the sacred fire with common fire, would be considered among them as a grave and dangerous transgression.

The Chippeways of the north kindle a fire on every new tomb, during four successive nights. They say that this symbolical and sacred light illumines their solitary and obscure passage to the country of souls. The following is the origin of this sacred and funereal fire among this people. I received the legend from the mouth of our worthy Watomika.

A little war-party of Chippeways met some enemies in a large and beautiful plain. The war-whoop was instantly shouted, and the contest commenced. Their chief was a valiant and distinguished warrior. On this occasion he sur-

* Longfellow has embodied this legend of Chipiapoos in his poem, "Hiawatha," but ascribes it to a plagiarist, who copied Father De Smet's narrative without the least credit.—*Editor.*

passed himself in bravery, and a great number of his enemies fell beneath the redoubled blows of his tomahawk. He was giving the signal and the cry of victory to his braves in arms, when he received an arrow in his breast and fell lifeless on the plain. The warrior who receives his last blow in the act of combating is never buried. According to the ancient custom, he remains seated on the battle-field, his back resting against a tree, and his face turned in the direction which indicates the flight of his enemies. It was the case with this chief. His grand crest of eagle feathers was properly adjusted on his head,—each plume denoted a trophy or a scalp won in combat. His face was carefully painted. They clothed him and adorned him with his most beautiful habiliments, as though he were yet alive. All his equipment was placed at his side, his bow and quiver of arrows, of which he had made such noble usage in war, reposing on his shoulder. The *post of the brave* was planted before him in solemn ceremony. He received all the honors due to an heroic and illustrious warrior. The rites, the chants, the funereal speeches, all, all were celebrated according to the custom of his nation in similar circumstances. His companions at length offered him their last farewells. No one had the slightest doubt of his *death*,—of the glorious death of their great chief. Were they deceived? The sequel of the legend will show.

Although deprived of speech and of all other means of giving signs of life, the chief heard distinctly all the words of the songs and of the discourses, the cries, the lamentations, and the bravadoes of his warriors. He witnessed their gestures, their dances, and all their ceremonies around the "post of honor." His icy hand was sensible to the pressure of the friendly grasp; his lips, though pale and livid, felt the ardor and heat of the farewell embrace and salute, without

his being able to return it. Perceiving himself thus forsaken, his anguish became excessive, as also his desire to accompany his companions in their return to the village. When he saw them disappear one after the other, his spirit agitated him in such a manner, that he made a violent movement,—he arose, or rather *seemed* to rise, and followed them. His form was invisible to them. This was for him a new cause of surprise and contradiction, which swelled at once his grief and his despair. However, he determined to follow them closely. Wheresoever they went, he went also. When *they* marched, *he* marched; whether riding or on foot, he was in their midst. He camped with them; he slept by their side; he awoke with them. In short, he shared in all their fatigues, in all their troubles, in all their labors. While he enjoyed the pleasure of their conversation, while he was present at their repasts, no drink was presented to allay his thirst, no dishes to appease his hunger. His questions and his responses equally remained without response. "Warriors! my braves!" cried he, with bitterness and anguish; "do you not hear the voice of your chief? Look! Do you not see my form? You remain motionless,—you seem not to see and hear me. Stanch the blood which is flowing from the deep wound I have received. Suffer me not to die deprived of aid, to famish amid abundance. O you braves! whom I led often into the thickest of the fight, who have always been obedient to my voice, already you seem to forget me! One drop of water to quench my feverish thirst,—one mouthful of sustenance! In my distress, how dare you refuse me!"

At each halt, he addressed them in alternate supplication and reproach, but in vain. No one understood his words. If they heard his voice, it was rather for them as the passage or the whispered murmurs of the wind of summer through

the foliage and branches of the forest, unnoticed and unheeded.

In fine, after a long and painful journey, the war-party arrived on the summit of a lofty eminence, which overlooked the whole village. The warriors prepared to make their solemn entrance. They decorated themselves with their handsomest ornaments, carefully painted their faces, attached to themselves their victorious trophies, especially scalps, which they fastened on the ends of their bows, tomahawks, and lances. Then burst forth a unanimous shout, the cry of joy and of victory of the Chippeways, the "Kumaudjeewug! Kumaudjeewug! Kumaudjeewug!"—that is to say, they have met; or, they have fought; or, they have conquered. This enthusiastic shout resounded throughout the whole camp. According to custom, the women and children went forth to meet the warriors, in order to honor their return and proclaim their praises. Those who had lost some members of their family, approached with anxiety and eagerness, to find out whether they were really dead, and to assure themselves that they died valiantly, in battling with the enemy. The old man, bowed by the weight of years, consoles himself for the loss of a son, if he sank like a brave man, arms in hand; and the grief of the youthful widow loses all its bitterness when she hears the praises bestowed on the manes of her valiant spouse. The stirring recitals of the combat awaken a martial fire in the hearts of all the youth; and children, yet incapable of understanding the cause of the grand festival, mingle their infantine shouts of joy and gladness with the boisterous and reiterated acclamations of the whole tribe.

Amid all this clamor and all these rejoicings, no one was conscious of the presence of the great war-chief. He heard the information that his near relations and his friends

received concerning his fortunes. He listened to the recital of his bravery, of his lofty deeds, of his glorious death in the midst of his vanquished enemies. He heard them speak of the post of the brave, planted in his honor on the field of battle. "Here I am!" cried he; "I see! I walk! Look at me! Touch me! I am not dead! Tomahawk in hand, I shall renew my march against the enemy, at the head of my braves; and soon, in the banquet, you will hear the tones of my drum!" No one heard him; no one perceived him. The voice of the great chief was no more to them than the perpetual din of the falling waters from cascade to cascade at the foot of their village. Impatient, he took the direction of his lodge. There he found his wife in deep despair, cutting, in token of mourning, her long and floating locks, lamenting her misfortune, the loss of a cherished husband, and the desolate state of her orphan children. He strove to undeceive her, and to comfort her with words of tenderness; he sought to clasp his infants in his arms; but here again, vain and futile were his efforts; they remained insensible to his voice and his paternal caresses. The mother, bathed in tears, sat inclining her head between her hands. The chief, suffering and dejected, besought her to dress his deep wound, to apply to it the herbs and roots contained in his medicine-sack; but she moved not; she answered only with tears and groans. Then he approached his mouth close to the ear of his wife, and shouted aloud, "I am thirsty! I am hungry! Give me food and drink!" The woman thought she heard a rumbling in her ear, and spoke of it to her companions. The chief, in his vexation, struck her a severe blow on the brow. She quietly pressed her hand to the stricken place, and said, "I feel a slight headache."

Frustrated at every step, and in all his attempts to make himself known, the great chief began to reflect on what he

had heard, in his youth, from the distinguished jugglers. He had learned that sometimes the spirit or soul quits the body and wanders up and down at hazard, according to its own will and pleasure. He therefore thought, that perchance his body was lying on the field of battle, and that his spirit only had accompanied the warriors on their return to the village. He instantly resolved to return by the path he had pursued, at a distance of four days' march. The three first days he met no one. In the afternoon of the fourth, when approaching the battle-field, he remarked a fire in the centre of the path which he was following. Wishing to avoid it, he quitted the track; but the fire, at the same instant, changed position, and placed itself before him. In vain he tried to go from right to left, the same mysterious fire ever preceded him, as if to bar his entrance to the field of battle. "I also," said he to himself, "I am a spirit; I am seeking to return into my body; I will accomplish my design. Thou wilt purify me, but thou shalt not hinder the realization of my project. I have always conquered my enemies, notwithstanding the greatest obstacles. This day I will triumph over thee, Spirit of Fire!" he said, and, with an intense effort, he darted towards the mysterious flame. He came forth from a long trance. He found himself seated on the battle-ground, his back supported against the tree. His bow, his arrows, his clothes, his ornaments, his war accoutrements, the *post of the brave*, all were in the same state and occupied the same position in which his soldiers had left them on the day of strife. He raised his eyes and perceived a large eagle, perched on the highest branch of a tree above his head. Instantly he recognized his manitou-bird, the same that had appeared to him in his earlier days, when he came forth from the state of childhood; the bird that he had selected for his tutelary spirit, and of which he

had always worn a talon suspended from his neck. His manitou had carefully guarded his body, and had prevented the vultures and other birds of prey from devouring it. The chief arose, stood some minutes, but found himself weak and reduced. The blood from his wound had ceased to flow, and he dressed it. He was acquainted with the efficacy of certain leaves and roots suitable for healing bruises. He sought them, gathered them with care in the forest, and crushing some between two stones, applied them. He chewed and swallowed others.

After the lapse of a few days, he felt sufficient strength to attempt to return to his village; but hunger consumed him. In the absence of large animals, he lived on little birds that his arrows brought down, insects and reptiles, roots and berries. After many hardships, he arrived at length on the shore of a river that separated him from wife, children, and friends. The chief uttered the shout agreed upon in such circumstances, the shout of the happy return of an absent friend. The signal was heard. A canoe was immediately sent for him. During the absence of the canoe, the conjectures were numerous concerning the absent person, whose friendly voice of approach had just been heard. All those who had belonged to the warlike band were present in the camp. The dead alone remained on the field of battle. "Might not the unknown on the other shore be an absent hunter? Or might not this shout prove a bold ruse of an enemy to take the scalps of the rowers?" To send a canoe was therefore judged imprudent, because they were not sure of the absence of an individual from the village.

While on the opposite shore all these conjectures were increasing, the war-chief embarks. He soon presents himself before them, amid the acclamations and joyful shouts of all his relatives and friends. The Indians eagerly pour forth

from every lodge to shake hands and celebrate the happy return of their chief and faithful conductor. That day will be for them ever memorable and solemn. They return thanks to the Master of Life, and to all the manitous of the Indian calendar, for the preservation and return of their beloved chief. The whole day is consumed in dances, songs, and banquets.

When the first burst of astonishment and universal joy had a little subsided, and the usual tranquillity was restored to the village, the chief beat his drum in order to convene his people. He related to them the whole story of his extraordinary adventures, and terminated his recital by making known to them, and imposing on them, "the worship of the sacred and funereal fire"—that is to say, the ceremony which consists in maintaining, during four consecutive nights, a fire on every newly-closed sepulchre. He told them that this devotion is advantageous and agreeable to the soul of the deceased; that the distance to the country of souls is four long days; that in this journey the soul needs a fire every night in its encampment; that this funereal-fire, kindled on the tomb by the near relations of the departed, serves to enlighten and warm the soul during its peregrination. The Chippeways believe that when this religious rite is neglected, the soul or spirit is forced to discharge the difficult task of making and maintaining a fire itself, and that with the greatest inconvenience.

Here I am, dear Father, at the close of the legend of the Chippeways. I give it as I received it. I am assured that it is very ancient. The worship of fire among our Indians springs from the worship of the primitive pagans, who, in order to purify themselves, leaped over fire, either a mysterious one, or lighted in honor of some divinity. The laws of Moses prohibited this practice among the Jews.

Yet, one word more, reverend Father, and I finish this lengthy epistle. If you will read over one of my former letters, you will there find that in my visit to the Crows, camped at the base of the Rocky Mountains, I was the object of an extreme veneration among these savages. Why, I was considered as the bearer or the guardian of the mysterious fire. In effect, I carried a box of phosphoric matches in the pocket of my *soutane*. The savages perceived that I used them to light my pipe or their calumet. In a second visit I learned the cause, very futile in itself, which had attached such great importance to my poor person.

I receive from time to time news from these poor and unfortunate pagans. They do not forget the visits which they have received, and I certainly never forget these dear children of my heart. They continue to beg, earnestly, every year, that missionaries be sent them to baptize their children and instruct them in the holy faith, which can alone render them happy here and hereafter.

You asked me one day, reverend Father, in an excursion which we made together during my last visit in Belgium, "What is the degree of civilization of the tribes that you have visited?" I replied to you: "I do not know all that Europeans wish us to comprehend by the word *civilization*." These savages are spoken of as exceptional beings, possessing another nature. They are men like ourselves. They only differ from us because they are ignorant, poor, and unfortunate. But their hearts are so good! There are some who have much natural ability, and what is more valuable, a great deal of faith and virtue! Is not the close of my letter a confirmation of what I said to you? What gratitude! What desire to know God! If, therefore, there is question of civilization of souls for heaven, oh! we have no need of European civilizers. Cause prayers to be offered

that God may send us missionaries, and we will make them happy!

I commend all these dear savages, our brethren in Jesus Christ, redeemed by the same blood, and inclosed in the same Sacred Heart—I commend them all most earnestly to your holy sacrifices, and to your kind prayers.

Deign to believe me, with the most profound respect, reverend Father,

Ræ. Væ. servus in Christo,

P. J. De Smet, S. J

Letter XVIII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

The Four Tribes of the Black-Feet—Gros-Ventres, Pégans, Blood-tribe, and Black-Feet proper.

University of St. Louis, October 28, 1855.

Rev. and dear Father:

In some of my letters of 1846, I spoke of my visit to the Black-Feet. I sojourned among the tribes, the Gros-Ventres, Pégans, Gens du Sang, and Black-Feet proper, about six weeks, and had the happiness of regenerating in the holy waters of baptism several hundred children and adults. In the month of October, after having bid adieu to Father Point, who proposed passing the winter in the Indian camps, in order to sound further their dispositions in a religious point of view, I left the country of the Black-Feet, in order to repair to St. Louis, where the affairs of the missions were awaiting me. During the residence of Father Point among those Indian populations, he collected many interesting traits concerning the character and manners of the savages; he had the kindness to communicate them to me. I sent a copy of his relation to our superiors in Europe; but I do not think it has ever been published. In the hope that it will afford you pleasure, and that it will prove worthy of your attention, I transmit to you some of the principal extracts. In 1847, Father Point wrote me:

"I think I can say, to the glory of the only Author of all Good, that with his grace I have not lost my time among the Black-Feet. I have performed six hundred and sixty-seven baptisms, the records of which are in due form; I have taken notes of whatsoever appeared to me suitable for interesting the curious or edifying the pious. During the winter I was accustomed, daily, to give three instructions, or catechetical lessons, proportioned to the three very different classes of my auditors. It is unnecessary for me to say that the prayers have all been translated into Black-Foot, and learned in Fort Louis and in the camp of the Pégans, and there is scarcely any camp among the Black-Feet in which the sign of the cross is not held in veneration, and even practised, at least among those individuals who have had any intercourse with the missionary.

"Of the twenty-five or thirty camp-leaders, or chiefs, who visited me, or whom I have visited, there is not one who has not given ideas of his people or tribe less disadvantageous than those generally entertained, and of course among the whites who inhabit the Indian Teritory as elsewhere. Among the different camps, there is a species of emulation as to which shall have the Black-gown, or rather the mission, on its lands. Concerning this article I have decided nothing. I have only said, that in case a Reduction were formed, it would be built in the position or locality which would afford the greatest advantages to all the tribes, taken collectively. All found this idea reasonable, and have promised that they would exert their utmost endeavors to satisfy the Black-gowns.

"The Gros-Ventres of the plains appear to me to have the advantage over the others, in being more adroit, more docile, and courageous; but they are more strongly attached to their old superstitions, and are terrible *demanders*, as the Canadian

employees here call shameless beggars: happily, they are not offended when refused. The Pégans are the most civilized, but the most noted thieves. The Gens du Sang are well made, of fine blood, and generally less dirty. It is said that the Black-Feet proper are the most hospitable.

"Such are the most striking traits of these four nations, so long at war with almost all their neighbors, and sometimes among themselves, at least, partially. Since they have had the proof that the true prayer renders men more valiant, happier, and generally tends to make him live longer (three advantages which they exalt above all others, and which they believe they perceive united in the Flat-Heads), the medicine-sack, or idolatry, with many, is falling into discredit.

"Several traits of divine justice, against those who have shown themselves less docile in following our counsels, and, on the contrary, several striking evidences of protection, in favor of those who followed them, have contributed greatly to work an admirable change in their ideas. By that, I do not mean to pronounce them saints: no; theft and assassination are not yet, in the eyes of the young, particularly, destitute of attractions. For this reason, notwithstanding the peace concluded with the Flat-Heads, and the inclination of the great men to maintain it, there were many depredations committed during the winter, to the detriment of the latter. But, let it be said, to the praise of the chiefs, the whole was disapproved by them. Nine or ten thieves have received their deserts from the Pends-d'Oreilles. This pacification, so desirable, under the double relation of humanity and social commerce, is the condition, *sine qua non*, of the conversion of the greater part of those poor Indians, unless God is pleased to work a miracle, which rarely has happened, except among the Flat-Heads.

"I pursued in the hunt, during nearly six weeks, the fifty lodges of the Pégans, which are under the command of the chief, Amakzikinne, or 'The Great Lake.' This camp is one of the seven or eight fractions of the Pégan tribe, amounting in all to about three hundred lodges. This tribe forms a part of the four, known under the generic title of Black-Feet. I have spoken of them already. The Pégans are the most civilized, on account of the relations of a portion of their people with the Flat-Heads. If the Gros-Ventres were less importunate, I would willingly entitle them 'the Flat-Heads' of the Missouri. They have something of their simplicity and their bravery. They are improperly ranked among the Black-Feet: besides, they did not originate in the country, they do not speak their language, and are different in many respects.*

"However this may be, these four tribes may contain about a thousand lodges, or ten thousand souls. This is not half what they were, before the contagion of small-pox introduced among them by the whites. I believe that women constitute more than two thirds of them, if not even three quarters. This inequality, so baneful to morals, is the result of war. In the visit that I paid to the Gros-Ventres, divided into two camps, I counted two hundred and thirty lodges. I visited, or received visits from, several fractions or detachments of Black-Feet, and further, an entire camp of Gens du Sang; and all were in such dispositions, that only a word on my part would have been necessary to enable me to baptize, with their consent, all the children from the largest down to

* The Gros-Ventres of the plains are a branch of the Rapahoes, who roam over the plains of New Mexico, and those on the Platte and Nebraska rivers. They separated from the nation a century and a half ago, on account of differences between their chiefs. The Gros-Ventres gave me this information.—(*Note by Father de Smet.*)

those of only a day old, which the mothers brought me of their own free will. I could have baptized a great number of adults; they even seemed to desire it ardently; but these desires were not yet sufficiently imbued with the true principles of religion. I could not content myself with the persuasion generally existing among the savages, that when they have received baptism they can conquer any enemy whatsoever. The courage and the happiness of the Flat-Heads have inspired them with this belief. This explains why some wretches, who seek only to kill their neighbors, were the first to petition for baptism. All say that they would be glad to have Black-gowns; but why do the greater part desire them? Because they think that all other imaginable blessings will come with them; not only courage to fight, but also every species of remedy to enable them to enjoy corporeal health. The Gros-Ventres conducted to me a hump-backed person and a near-sighted person that I might heal them. I said that this kind of cures surpassed my abilities; which did not, however, hinder them from making other similar requests. But at last, by continually repeating to them, that the Black-gowns can heal souls, but not always the body, some at last believe me. They believe also that we can excite diseases, and cause the thunder to roll when we are not satisfied. Quite recently, there was an earthquake in the land of the Gros-Ventres, and directly the report was spread abroad that I was the cause of the Earth's trembling; and that this shock was an indication that the small-pox was about to return into the country, etc., and all this happened because the Indians did not give attention sufficient to the discourse of the Black-gown. There is actually a malady raging among the Pégans, said to be mortal, and which indeed has proved fatal to a few persons. As this disease begins in the ear, they consider themselves more

justified than the Gros-Ventres, in saying 'that this punishment arrived to them on account of their hardness of heart,' in listening to the words of the Great Spirit. For myself, what appeared most striking, was the sudden death of a dozen of persons, stricken down either in their lodges or in war, but at the moment that they were straying most widely from the right path. One of these, belonging to the Black-Feet, had robbed me of three mules; he died on the morrow after his arrival home, and after finding himself divested of his capture, which were conducted back to me. This death was certain to provoke the saying: 'Woe to him who robs the Black-gowns!' Thus in one way or another Almighty God is preparing the way for the conversion of these poor idolaters.

"To return to the Pégans, with whom I have lived about six weeks, I will observe that those who, among the savages, call themselves 'Great Men' would be disposed to listen wholly to us, could we but make terms with them on the article of plurality of wives; that the youth, in their turn, would as cheerfully, if we could immediately make 'Great Men' of them; but this being scarcely possible, all the reasonings of the wise can with difficulty induce them to refrain from robbery. If they can rob adroitly and in large value from the enemies of their nation, they never fail to do it; but if the theatre of their legitimate thefts is too remote, it is not rare to find them seeking among friendly tribes (for example, the Pends-d'Oreilles or the Flat-Heads) what would prove too troublesome to seek elsewhere. A few days since, the three brothers of The Great Lake, to one of whom the Flat-Heads have three times granted life, came with two good and handsome horses taken from the Pends-d'Oreilles, who had just spared the lives of two of their youth. Already twice before, after similar misdeeds, The Great Lake, not-

withstanding my strong remonstrances, had not the courage to blame them. Among the Black-Feet, the rich people, who undertake to rebuke the wicked who possess nothing, have naught to gain and all to lose. As there is neither lawful authority on one side nor conscience on the other, a second theft, or a musket-shot, is not rare.

"In these thefts, however, there is one thing which excuses, to a certain degree, the silence of the chief of whom I have just spoken; it is the robbery of two horses to his detriment committed by a young Flat-Head; but this precedent cannot certainly justify the reprisals; for, besides restitution having been promised to him, he knew well that the thief in question was an outcast from his tribe; that he ought not to imitate him; that he was only to follow the example of the good, who were all desirous of dwelling in peace with the Black-Feet, etc. But in vain we instruct them and refresh their memories, we discover that these reasons enter their minds with difficulty, and still less their hearts, which have neither the uprightness nor the generosity of their allies. Aside from these miseries, and some false maxims derived from the whites, the remainder, and even the very efforts of hell to resume a prey which is escaping her, all that is accomplishing at this moment in this country announces that the day of its regeneration is not remote. What most consoles us, is that this regeneration, if things continue, will be due, in great measure, to the present exemplary conduct at the fort.

"Every day after mass, I teach the children their prayers; every evening the men recall them to memory mutually; at six o'clock in the evening these recite their prayers in common in my own room, after which I give them an instruction; then comes the turn of the women. Now, these women, baptized and lawfully married, or preparing for baptism

and marriage, oblige their husbands to say (the latter having almost all approached the sacraments): 'What a change! what a difference!' In fact, this difference is so sensible, that it is obvious to all the savages who come in throngs to the fort, and do not return without coming to assure me, 'that they also wish to learn and follow the way to heaven, since it is only in that path and in heaven that real happiness is found.' What are their narrations when they return to their families? New visitors, better disposed than ever in regard to the fort and on the subject of prayer, easily make known.

"I have yet one consoling piece of news to announce. On my route, travelling with the Pégan camp, I baptized fourteen little infants of the Crow nation, so well did I find them disposed,—these were on their way to visit the Gros-Ventres. They desire to see you among them again. Indulging this hope, they will go to meet you in the spring. At a distance, as when present, Reverend Father, I shall never cease to offer devout and heartfelt petitions for the success of an enterprise, to which it has pleased Divine Providence to associate me from its commencement. It will always be allowable for me to do by prayers, what I cannot effect by my works. I am, etc.,

"N. Point, S. J."

The project of going to these poor Indians has never been abandoned. Every returning spring they send pressing invitations to the Black-gowns to come and establish themselves among them, in order to be taught the way of the Lord. During the current year, we have received invitations from the Black-Feet, the Crows, the Assiniboins, the Sioux, Ponkahs, and Omahas, with many other tribes; the number of these Indians surpasses 70,000. A great number of in-

fants and adults have received baptism. The vast wilderness that they occupy boasts not a single priest at this moment! During fifteen years they supplicate pastors!

Allow me, Reverend Father, to request the aid of your prayer and holy sacrifices, and deign to commend the poor Indians to the kind remembrance of the pious souls of your acquaintance, that the Lord may condescend to hear these unhappy men, and send good pastors into this wide-spread "vineyard," so long neglected, but which promises such a glorious harvest.

In union with your devout petitions and holy sacrifices, I have the honor to be, with the most profound respect and highest esteem, Reverend and dear Father,

Your very devoted servant and brother in Jesus Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XIX.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

The Sioux.

Paris, November 17, 1856.

Rev. and dear Father:

I find with pleasure in your number of the 15th inst., the interesting letter of Father Adrian Hoeken, written to me from the Flat-Head camp, which I sent you from St. Louis before I started for Belgium.

Herewith are four letters of his brother, Father Christian Hoeken, which will, I think, be found as interesting as Father Adrian's. In a few days I shall see you at Brussels.

First Letter of Father Christian Hoeken.—To Father De Smet.

Sioux County, Post Vermilion, Dec. 11, 1850.

Rev. and dear Father:

You have doubtless learned, by Father Duerinck's letters, that I set out last June for the Sioux country. The season was quite favorable when I left Kansas, but I had a pretty cold time as I crossed Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota, till I got to the post of the American Fur Company, called Post Vermilion. My inability to find a good guide to lead me to Fort Pierre, the great post of the Missouri, made me lose five days of excellent weather.

At last I succeeded in finding a companion who had crossed backward and forward, for the last thirty-three years, every plain, mountain, forest, and prairie of the West. I set out the day before the weather changed. On the third day the snow overtook us. On reaching James River we found it impassable; the water was too high and too cold for our horses to swim it. We had to ascend it to find a ford. We travelled eight or nine days without finding any place or means to cross. A violent north wind set in, so that we were nearly frozen to death. We accordingly began to descend the valley of the river, but had not made over five or six miles when night surprised us, and we had to encamp in a spot which offered scarce wood enough for one night. We had hardly encamped when the north wind began to blow with horrible violence; the snow fell so thick and fast, that you would have said the clouds had burst. You may imagine our position, and how much we pitied each other. Sleep was out of the question. The next morning we struck our camp. The snow and wind raged with unabated fury for two days and two nights. In some spots there were six, fifteen, and even twenty feet of snow. Conceive our position if you can, as we made our way along the valley of James River, which runs between two chains of mountains, with deep ravines near each other.

We were almost out of provisions, entirely alone, in a sad desert, where we could see nothing but snow; we had no one to encourage us, except the spirit of divine charity, at whose voice I had undertaken this painful journey. The snow grew high around us, our horses would not proceed. The gloomy thought that we could never cross the river crushed out all courage; but I was consoled when I remembered the words of Divine Wisdom: "It is good for you to suffer temptation." To fill up our misery, rheumatism seized

both my knees, so that I could not set one foot before another. One of our horses fell lame and was no better than myself. Moreover, the keen norther froze my ears, nose, and feet, and my companion's feet. The poor man complained of violent pains in the bowels, caused doubtless by fatigue and hunger. The elements seemed to conspire against us; and it is only by a special assistance of heaven that we did not perish in this strait. "I never saw any thing like it. I have lived, wandered, travelled, for thirty-five years all over the upper Missouri, but never, never was I in such a scrape as this." Such were the frequent exclamations of my guide. For my part, I was forced by a dire necessity to march against my inclination, or rather to drag myself along as best I could. I gathered up what little courage I had left. I walked on in the snow from morning to night, praying and weeping in turns, making vows and resolutions. The aspirations of the prophets and apostles were the subject of my communications with Heaven. "Confirm me, O Lord, in this hour. Rebuke me not in thy fury, and chastise me not in thy wrath." This I repeated at almost every instant. When I sank to my waist in snow, I cried: "Have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us. For thee and for thine have we come unto this hour. Stretch out thy arm to lead us. Lord, we perish." Meanwhile, we advanced painfully over the mountains of snow, till night summoned us to plant our tent, which consisted, be it said here, of a square piece of a skin tent-cover. We set to work with courage, clearing away the snow, getting down a framework and wood enough for our fires at night. The fire is kindled; we have finished our night prayers; we have only a morsel to eat. Now, then, repose for a few hours. Impossible. Sleep has fled our eyelids; the smoke blinds and stifles us, at almost every instant we had to cough; my companion said that it was impossible

to distinguish one object from another, the smoke had so blinded him. How sleep, with the wolves howling and prowling around us! The snow and sometimes rain and hail fell on us all night long. Often, while listening for any noise, the prayer, "From all danger, rain and hail, deliver us, O Lord!" escaped my trembling lips involuntarily. Thank Heaven, the Almighty heard our humble supplication; every day he gave us fine weather, though bitter cold. My greatest fear every morning, was that my companion would bring word that our horses were dead of cold or hunger in those bleak and sterile tracts. Had this loss befallen us, our misfortune would have been complete. I put myself and all belonging to me under the special protection of our good and amiable patroness, the Blessed Virgin Immaculate, and I often reminded her, with filial confidence, that we had been committed to her care at the foot of the cross.

From day to day, my guide was the more urgent that we should abandon the lame horse so as not to be frozen for him. We had to lose a good part of the day in unloading and reloading him, because he fell at almost every step on the slippery snow; yet by care, pain, fatigue, and patience, we arrived with our two horses at Post Vermilion. Famished and almost dying as we were (having had nothing to eat for ten days, but a little bread and a prairie-hen that my companion killed by chance), sleepless and wearied to death, we reached Vermilion on the 8th of December, the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To express the joy that overflowed my soul on that happy day I would need write in tears, not in ink, and you could trace my feelings better than if delineated with a pen. I was at the end of hunger, cold, snow, rain, hail, tramping, and blasphemy that filled me with horror every time my companion vented his wrath on the horse or the evils we experienced. I

rebuked him frequently and begged him to refrain, but in vain; the poor man had always the same excuse: "It was a second nature with him, and he meant no harm." Wretched excuse! I suffered more from his troubles and murmurs than from all the other miseries put together. To my prayers of blended hope, and fear, and anguish, succeeded now hymns of gratitude and joy. Instead of my ordinary aspirations: "Enough, Lord, it is enough. Command the winds and there shall be a great calm. Lord, thou hast said: Ask and you shall receive. Give us this day our daily bread," and so on, I now exclaim: "We praise thee, O Lord! great is thy power, Lord God of hosts."

Mr. Charles Larpenteur, whose hospitality you have often enjoyed when travelling in the desert to visit the Indian tribes, is now in charge of the post, and he received us with all the goodness of a father. He procured us all that he could. May the Lord bless him, for he deserves it. "The Samaritan in the Gospel," said he, "took care of an unfortunate man, and poured oil and wine into his wounds. Sir," he added, "you are welcome. I offer you all I have; I wish to treat you as well as is in my power." The dignity and worth of charity are never better felt than on similar occasions, and by beggars like us.

I shall spend some days instructing and baptizing a score of people who live around here. I shall endeavor to recover from my unusual hardships before I start. In the mean while the snow will melt, the roads become better, and I will resume my journey.

Receive the assurance of my respect. Present my respects to the Fathers and Brothers, and believe me,

Rev. and dear Father,

Your devoted servant and brother in Christ,

CHRISTIAN HOEKEN, S. J.

You see, Rev. Father, by this letter of Father Hoeken, that the consolations of heaven are constantly tempered by the desolations of earth. This is the support of the laborers in the vineyard of the Lord.

I have come to Europe for missionaries. Belgium has already furnished many. St. Francis Xavier asked for Belgians. Shall I succeed in getting some? Cannot I count on my own land as much as on Holland, France, or Italy?

Second Letter of Father Christian Hoeken.—To Father Elet.

TERRITORY OF THE PLATTE, Dec. 28, 1850.

REVEREND AND DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL:

According to my express promise in my letters, I write to tell you where I have been, and what I have done since I left the Kansas, till my return from the Upper Missouri.

I travelled by the way of Weston, without a cent in my pocket. I had to trust entirely to Providence. A draft of ten dollars on Father De Smet, enabled me to get the actual necessaries for my journey. I should have drawn more, but it was all they could let me have.

On the way I met several old friends, whose liberality did not improve my poverty. I reached St. Joseph at the foot of the Black-Snake Hills. My horse could not stand the hard travel. Others were of my opinion, among them was Mr. Scanlan, who offered me an Indian horse to go as far as Bellevue, and also to take charge of mine. I accepted his kind offer. In two days I was quite disappointed. The horse was very lazy, and weak in the bargain. I changed him at the great Pacoa river for a good horse, whose exterior promised better in the long journey before me. I gave the man a draft on Mr. P. A. Sarpy to pay the difference.

On reaching Bellevue, I learned from Mr. Sarpy that Messrs. Bruyère and Argot had started the day before, and that I could easily overtake them; that there was no guide for me, and they knew none about there. I bought the necessary utensils, a little pot, tin-pans, provisions, &c., and started in pursuit of the gentlemen, who live about thirty miles below Post Vermilion at the mouth of the great Sioux. I overtook them next day at Boyer River. I travelled in their company seven days, when we reached the great Sioux.

I spent three days there instructing the people, and baptized fourteen persons. They treated me with great kindness, and expressed their extreme delight at the prospect of the establishment of a Sioux mission. They promised to pay for their children's board. They are not only full of good-will, but capable of acting.

As for the mixed race of the Santies (a Sioux tribe), they receive from government about a thousand dollars a head, according to the treaty made last year at St. Peter's River in the Upper Missouri. You see, then, Reverend Father, that if we defer founding a mission among them, they will send their children elsewhere. Do not imagine that the number of these poor children, all baptized by Father De Smet and others, is insignificant. The halfbreeds exist in great numbers everywhere, with thousands of Indians. Must all these children, of whom several thousand have already received holy baptism, perish for want of instruction? Are they doomed to remain sitting in the shadow of death? May I not announce to them all, the precious tidings of vocation to grace? I trust, in God's mercy, the day of their deliverance is at hand; that they will soon perceive the aid of the Saviour and Redeemer. My daily prayer is (above all at the Holy Altar) that their expectations and frequent appeals may at length find a term.

I forgot to say, that on arriving at Linden, a village situated eight miles below the River Nishnebatlana, I found Major Matlock very dangerously ill with dysentery. He recognized me at once, and cried out: "Father Hoeken, I am extremely glad to see you. I wished to see you much a long time; but I am so indisposed at this moment that I cannot converse with you. Could you not come a little later?" "Most willingly," I replied: "I will see you by and by." An hour after I returned to his room in the hotel; I found him half asleep. He heard my voice, and after having dismissed those who were with him, he spoke to me of his religious convictions. He informed me that he had been brought up in the Methodist sect, but that he did not believe in their views, and that his most ardent desire was to become a Catholic. He then made his confession to me; after which, I baptized him conditionally. He appeared to me to be perfectly contented and resigned to die. I have since learned that he did not long survive his baptism. May he rest in peace.

I commend myself to your prayers and sacrifices, Rev. Father Provincial,

Your most humble servant,

CHRISTIAN HOEKEN, S. J.

Third Letter of Father Christian Hoeken.—To Father Elet.

ST. JOSEPH'S, Jan. 3, 1851.

REV. AND VERY DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL:

I was obliged to wait in order to regulate my account with Mr. P. A. Sarpy, who was absent when I arrived at Council Bluffs. That time was not lost. I had the happi-

ness of baptizing a great number of children of the Omaha tribe, and I met the young chief, Logan Fontenelle. He is a spiritual child of Father De Smet. He is very worthy of the post he fills in his tribe, and will do all in his power to convert his people and bring them to the true faith.*

I quitted Council Bluffs on the 27th of December. I arrived on the River Nishnebatlana at a place called *French Village*. It is occupied almost exclusively by Canadians, by half-breeds, and a mixture of Indians united among themselves. I was received with much kindness, and employed Saturday and Sunday in confirming and strengthening them in the faith.

As soon as my arrival was known, the people collected on all sides, in order to secure to their children the grace of baptism. You can easily imagine what a consolation it was to me after the fatigues of the late journey. On examining the state of things, I found that those people needed instruction in regard to the sacrament of marriage. They listened to me with profound attention, and followed my advice on this point. I baptized sixteen persons, among whom was one converted from Mormonism and one Sioux squaw. I gave the nuptial benediction to three couples. In the midst of a meeting held in a private house, the conversation fell on the construction of a village church; each one offered his services, and promised to approach the sacraments. How great and plentiful is the harvest, but alas, how few are the reapers! We must, in truth, but in sadness, repeat with the prophet Jeremy: "The children ask bread and there is no one to break it to them." What a vast field for them of whom the Scripture says: "How beautiful upon the moun-

* He fell, in 1855, in a combat against a great war-party of the Sioux. —(*Note by Father De Smet.*)

tains are the footsteps of those who proclaim the glad tidings of peace and salvation." A month's travelling in the desert through which these people are wandering deprived of instruction, would bestow on our missionaries greater experience of the evils of ignorance and of superstition, than many years passed in studying them in books and writings, and one hour of conversation would inspire Christian hearts with sentiments of more real compassion, than all the discourses of rhetoric and all the artifices of eloquence could ever produce. If the Catholics of civilized countries, and provided with all the advantages that civilization offers for the soul and for the body, could, during one single week, experience what is endured in the midst of the ravages and violence of this poor Indian country, their hearts would open to the sentiments of a truly active compassion, and they would extend a charitable hand to relieve the misery and mitigate the bitterness of their wretched and afflicting condition. There are in human life certain marks of degradation which, at first sight, awaken the tender sentiments of a Christian heart; there are interior trials and sorrows which need to be related to excite charity towards those who suffer them. Such are, my dear Father, the troubles and sufferings of the Indians. Deprived of civilized society, destitute of all the advantages of social life, ignorant of the very elements of individual duty, they are a prey to exterior deceptions, to interior illusions, and their days are counted by overwhelming evils and misfortunes as numerous as the hours which mark their duration. But when it pleases a wise Providence to permit that they be visited by other and extraordinary trials, as it happened to the Potawatomies, who lost their harvest, their ills are increased a hundredfold, and nothing but the consolations of the Gospel are capable of ameliorating the hard lot of barbarism and the anguish of ignorance. May Heaven deign

to inspire a large number of worthy ministers of the Church with a zeal in conformity with the will of God, and inspire also a great number of Christians with that charity which covers a multitude of sins, in order that they may come to their aid amid the painful sufferings which they are at this moment undergoing.

My respects to all,

Rev. Father Provincial,

Your most humble servant,

CHRISTIAN HOEKEN, S. J.

Fourth Letter.—To Rev. Father Elet.

BELLEVUE, December 23, 1850.

REV. AND VERY DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL:

I left Post Vermilion on the third Sunday of Advent; I descended the Great Sioux as far as its confluence. There I met with Major Halton, who is agent for the Upper Missouri.

He employed all his eloquence to persuade me to accompany him as far as Fort Pierre, which is the post of the Little Missouri. He will probably stop there, at about the middle of January. God alone knows what the weather will prove at that time, He presented us a beautiful buffalo-robe, and told me, that if we would establish a mission in these sections, he would contribute annually a hundred dollars. Another gentleman added, I have three children to educate; I will furnish three hundred dollars per year, and be assured, continued he, that every white man residing in this locality that has a family of mixed race (and there are a great number of them), will assist you to the best of their ability —one in one manner and another in another, according to

their means. The Brulés, the Jantons, and the other Sioux tribes, assembled in council said: "The missionaries shall not perish with hunger among us; we will bring them an abundance of buffalo-robes and buffalo-meat, so that they can purchase clothes for the children who will be confided to them."

For the love of God and of souls, I conjure you, reverend Father, not to defer any longer. All the good that Father De Smet and others have produced by their labors and visits will be lost and forgotten, if these Indians are disappointed in their expectations. They weigh men's characters in the balance of honesty; in their eyes whosoever does not fulfil his promises is culpable; they do not regard or consider whether it be done for good reasons, or that there is an impossibility in the execution. Some of them have sent their children to Protestant schools, and they will continue to do so as long as we form no establishments among them.

From all this you may easily conclude that there is apostasy and all its attendant evils. Immortal souls are precious in the sight of God. You are acquainted with my dispositions—arrange every thing according to your own good will and pleasure. My sole desire is to endure fatigue and suffering, as much as I can with God's assisting grace, and as long as I shall live. I have deposited my hopes in the bosom of my God; I expect my recompense from his goodness, not in this life, but in the next.

Yours, &c.,

CHRISTIAN HOEKEN, S. J.

These four letters of Rev. Father Hoeken show sufficiently, my dear and reverend Father, the spiritual wants of these nations and their desire of being assisted. Apostasy is more frequent than is generally believed in Europe. Oh! if the

zealous priests of the Continent knew what we know, had they seen what we have witnessed, their generous hearts would transport them beyond the seas, and they would hasten to consecrate their lives to a ministry fruitful in salutary results. Time presses; already the sectaries of various shades are preparing to penetrate more deeply into the desert, and will wrest from those degraded and unhappy tribes their last hope—that of knowing and practising the sole and true faith. Shall they, in fine, obtain the Black-gowns, whom they have expected and called for during so many years?

Accept, Rev. Father, the assurance of my sincere friendship.

P. J. De Smet.

Letter XX.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Tributes to the Flat-Heads.

To the Mother Superior of the Convent and Academy of Erps-Querbs, between Brussels and Louvain.

Brussels, Feast of St. Xavier, December 3, 1856.

Reverend Mother:

The festival of to-day renews in my mind the recollection of the pleasant time I spent at Erps, last Monday.

I must again thank you for the kind reception I received at your convent and academy.

The repeated invitations you have extended to me, since my return to Belgium, through Father Terwecoren, who took me there, made it a duty on my part to go. I owed you this visit also personally, Reverend Mother, on account of the ties which always have existed, and still exist, between your family and mine. This recommendation was made to me at Termond. It was, indeed, pleasant for me to meet you, after thirty-five years' absence, and especially to find you consecrated to God by the vows of religion. During my long travels over the world, I have always found in religious communities the greatest amount of happiness to which man can aspire here below.

But independent of this personal motive, the Academy of the Servants of Mary would leave, in my mind, a most pleasing recollection. I shall never forget this little family festival, the charitable and pious words addressed to me by one

of your scholars, in the name of her companions; the earnest attention paid by them to my accounts, and the prayers they promised me for my poor Indians; that beautiful hymn in honor of St. Francis Xavier, the patron of missionaries; the happiness of the little village-children, gathered in the day-school, where their hearts learn to love God and serve him by labor; the respectful deference of all the sisters, and of your worthy director.

I thank you, then, Reverend Mother, for this welcome; and, in the name of the Indians, I thank you especially for the alms which the convent has confided to me for them, and the vestments which you prepare. The Indians pray for their benefactors; they will pray especially for the Servants of Mary, and for their young pupils, as soon as I tell them all.

As an anticipated testimony of their gratitude, and that the remembrance of this day may abide, your community ever prosper more and more, your young ladies, when they come forth from that house of the Lord, preserve preciously the inappreciable gift of piety and the pure lustre of all virtue, I propose to give to the first little Indian girls that I baptize after my return, the Christian names of the religious and pupils whom I saw assembled, that they may pray for their benefactresses. Please to prepare a list, and send it to Father Terwecoren, who is collecting all that is offered for the mission.

I add to this letter a copy of the tributes of admiration paid to the Flat-Heads, as well as the Pater and Ave in Osage. It is a little souvenir for the Academy of Erps-Querbs.

I. *Tribute of admiration rendered to the Flat-Heads, by an officer of the United States army, sent with Governor Stevens to explore St. Mary's Valley.* These lines are drawn

from a report recently issued by order of government. *Explorations, &c., from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean*, p. 308. Lieutenant Mullan says:

"When I arrived at the camp with my guide, three or four men came out to meet us, and we were invited to enter the lodge of the great chief. With much eagerness they took care of our horses, unsaddled them, and led them to drink. As soon as the camp had been informed of the arrival of a white man among them, all the principal men of the tribe collected at the lodge of the chief.

"All being assembled, at a signal given by the chief, they prayed aloud. I was struck with astonishment, for I had not the least expectation of such conduct on their part. The whole assembly knelt. In the most solemn manner, and with the greatest reverence, they adored the Lord. I asked myself: Am I among Indians? Am I among people whom all the world call savages? I could scarcely believe my eyes. The thought that these men were penetrated with religious sentiments, so profound and beautiful, overwhelmed me with amazement.

"I could never say enough of those noble and generous hearts among whom I found myself. They were pious and firm, men of confidence, full of probity, and penetrated at the same time with a lively and religious faith, to which they remain constant. They never partake of a repast without imploring the blessing of Heaven. In the morning, when rising, and at night, when retiring, they offer their prayers to Almighty God. The tribe of the Flat-Heads among the Indians is the subject of their highest esteem; and all that I witnessed myself justifies this advantageous opinion."

Here is another testimony from the Hon. Isaac J. Stevens, governor of Washington Territory. Giving orders to Lieut. M., he says:

"Tell those good Flat-Heads that the words of Father De Smet in their behalf have been received by their Great Father, the President of the United States, and that all good people are devoted to them. I would like to rebuild St. Mary's. Let them know that I am attached to them, and ready to aid their old benefactors in their well-being. This would be most pleasing to me."

He wrote to the Indian agent:

"You are already aware of the character of the Flat-Heads. They are the best Indians of the mountains and the plains—honest, brave, and docile, they only need encouragement to become good citizens—they are Christians, and we are assured that they live up to the Christian code."

This passage is from the report to the President, in 1854. You see, reverend brother, that my eulogium at Erps-Querbs, on the Flat-Heads, is also in the mouths of the Americans. It is the same with the other Indians. The sisters and the pupils may then rely on the prayers and gratitude of the little girls who bear their names. May these children of the desert have the same means of salvation as the children of Belgium.

II. *Pater and Ave, in Osage.*

Intâtze ankougtapi manshigta ningshè, shashe dichta
Father our in heaven who art, name thy
ouchoupegtselou, wawalagtankapi dichta tshighselou. Hakistse
be hallowed. kingdom thy come. Will
ingshe manshingta ekionpi, manshan lai ackougtsiow.
thy in heaven be done on earth be it done likewise.
Humpale humpake sani wâtsütse ankougtapi wakupiow.
To-day and day every bread our to us give.
Ouskan pishi wacshiegchepa ankionle ankale, aikon
Action bad to us which has been done, we it forgive, so

ouskan pishi ankougtapi waonlapiow. Ouskan pishi
action bad ours us forgive. Action bad
ankagchetapi wasankapi ninkow. Nansi pishi ingshe
to do by us lead us not. But evil from
walietsi sapiow. Aikougtsiou.
deliver us. Amen.

Hawai Marie, Wagkonda odikupi odishailow
Hail Mary, of the Great Spirit of gifts thou art.
Wagkonda shodigue acchow. Wakoki odisanha
The Great Spirit with thee is. The women among them
odichoupegtsiow. Jusus tsaitse oulagran ingshe
thou art blessed. Jesus of the womb the fruit thy
ougoupegtsiow. Wâlâgui Marie Wagkonda, Ehonh,
is blessed. Holy Mary, of the Great Spirit the Mother,
wawatapiow, dekousi antzapi aitchanski. Aikougtsiou.
pray for us now and at the moment of our death. Amen.

Accept, reverend Mother, this trifling homage of my gratitude, and express the same sentiments to your worthy Director, community, and pupils.

Your servant in Christ,

P. J. De Smet.

Letter XXI.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Oregon Missions.

University of St. Louis, July 16, 1857.

Reverend Father:

Since my return to St. Louis I have been very busy, and not very well, in consequence of the sudden transition from a cold climate to one where the thermometer stands at 90° Fahrenheit. I have not been able, thus far, to send you any interesting article. I have lately received a long and beautiful letter from Father A. Hoeken, in the Rocky Mountains. It appeared, on the 11th instant, in the *Freeman's Journal*, which you receive regularly. I shall try and send you a translation.

I inclose to-day a short notice of Father Eysvogels. If you give it a place in your *Précis*, it will give pleasure to the friends and acquaintances of that good Father in North Brabant.

As you propose terminating a volume of my letters, you would do well, perhaps, to add, if there is time, a letter to the St. Louis *Leader*, dated June 19, 1855, which you can have translated.

St. Louis, June 19, 1855.

Mr. Editor:

From a letter received from the Rocky Mountains about two months ago, I learn that the Indians, in our different missions in Oregon, continue to give great satisfaction to

their missionaries, by their zeal and fervor in the holy practices of religion. "I hope," writes Father Joset, "that the holy Sacrament of Confirmation, which many have lately received, will add still more stability to their good resolutions. The arrival of Monseigneur Blanchet, of Nesqualy, had been announced only a few hours before, yet, notwithstanding that one half of the neophytes were absent on their hunting-grounds, the zealous prelate gave confirmation to over six hundred persons. He expressed the greatest satisfaction at the flourishing condition of the missions, and the exemplary and Christian conduct of the Indian faithful."

The conversions to our holy faith, if you consider the small number of our missionaries, are very consoling and encouraging. Father Joset says, that in the mission of St. Paul's alone, among the Shuyelpies or Kettlefall Indians, he had one hundred and sixty-three converts in the course of the year. He further states in his letter, that Lieut. Mullan, of the United States Army, visited the Flat-Heads, and several others of our missions, by order of Governor Stevens, of the new Territory of Washington, and that the distinguished officer had expressed great delight at all he saw among the Indians, promising withal to favor them and to speak well of them in his report. Governor Stevens himself, in his report to the President of the United States, commends them highly, and calls upon the government for aid and assistance. "They are," says he, speaking of the Flat-Heads, "the best Indians of the mountains and the plains—honest, brave, and docile—they only need encouragement to become good citizens; they are Christians, and we are assured that they live up to the Christian code," &c.

Most respectfully, dear sir,

Your humble and obedient servant,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

You see, Reverend Father, that I have cited the testimon of Governor Stevens, as to our Indian missions. The details which I shall give you in this letter emanate from the same source, as honorable as it is truthful. They form part of an official report on the state of Oregon, sent by that magistrate to the President of the United States, in 1855, and published by order of government.

Speaking of the tribe of Pends-d'Oreilles, the governor says:

"I am indebted to Dr. Suckley for many interesting facts in relation to the mission of St. Ignatius, established among the lower Pends-d'Oreilles; it would be difficult to find a more beautiful example of successful missionary labors. The mission was established nine years ago, by Rev. P. J. De Smet, the whole country at that time being a vast wilderness.

"For the first two years the missionaries lived in skin lodges, accompanying the natives on their periodical hunts and visits to their fishing-grounds.

"During this time they found it very hard to live. Their food consisted principally of camash-roots and dried berries, which at best contain very little nourishment. They raised some wheat, which they boiled in the beard, for fear of waste; parching some of the grains to make a substitute for coffee. After this, they slowly but steadily increased in welfare. Each year added a small piece to their tillable ground. They then obtained pigs, poultry, cattle, horses, agricultural implements, and tools. Their supplies of tools, seeds, groceries, clothing, &c., are shipped direct from Europe to the Columbia river. There are two lay brethren attached to the mission. One of them, Brother Francis, is a perfect Jack-of-all-trades. He is by turns a carpenter, blacksmith, gunsmith, and tinman; in each handicraft he is a good workman. The other, Brother McGean, superintends the farming

operations. They both worked hard in bringing the mission to its present state of perfection, building successively a wind-mill, blacksmith's and carpenter's shops, barns, cow-sheds, &c., besides an excellent chapel, in addition to a large dwelling-house, of hewn timber, for the missionaries.

"The church is quite large, and is tastefully and even beautifully decorated. I was shown the handsomely carved and gilded altar, the statue of our 'Mother,' brazen crosses, and rich bronzed fonts—work which at sight appears so well executed as to lead one to suppose that they must all have been imported.

"Works of ornament are not their only deeds. A grind-stone, hewn out of the native rock, and modelled by the same hand which made the chisel which wrought it, tin-ware, a blacksmith's bellows, plough-shares, bricks for their chimneys, their own tobacco-pipes, turned with the lathe out of wood, and lined with tin, all have been made by their industry. In household economy they are not excelled. They make their own soap, candles, vinegar, &c., and it is interesting and amusing to listen to the account of their plans, shifts, and turns, in overcoming obstacles at their first attempts, their repeated failures, and their final triumphs. The present condition of the mission is as follows:

"The buildings are: the house, a good, substantial, comfortable edifice; the chapel, a building sufficiently large to accommodate the whole Kalispelum nation. A small building is attached to the dwelling-house; it contains a couple of sleeping-rooms, and a workshop, a blacksmith's shop, and a store-room for the natives. These are all built of square or hewn timber. Besides these there are a number of smaller out-buildings, built of logs, for the accommodation of their horses and cattle during the winter, and an excellent root-house.

"The mission farm consists of about one hundred and sixty acres of cleared land: wheat (spring), barley, onions, cabbages, parsnips, peas, beets, potatoes, and carrots. Father Hoeken says, that if the children see carrots growing, they must eat some. Says he, 'I must shut my eyes to the theft, because they *cannot* resist the temptation. Any thing else than carrots, the little creatures respect.'

"The Indians are very fond of peas and cabbages, but beets, and particularly onions, they dislike. The other productions of the farm are cattle, hogs, poultry, butter, and cheese. Around the mission buildings are the houses of the natives. These are built of logs and hewn timber, and are sixteen in number. There are also quite a number of mat and skin lodges. Although the tribe is emphatically a wandering tribe, yet the mission and its vicinity are looked upon as head-quarters.

"When the missionaries came among the Indians, they found them to be a poor, miserable, half-starved race, with an insufficiency of food, and nearly naked; living upon fish, camash and other roots, and, as the last extremity, upon the pine-tree moss. They were in utter misery and want. The whole time was occupied in providing for their bellies, which were rarely full. They were of a peaceable disposition, brave, good-tempered, and willing to work.

"Of spiritual things they were utterly ignorant. Unlike the Indians east of the mountains, they had no idea of a future state or of a Great Spirit, neither had they any idea of a soul; in fact, they had not words in their language to express such ideas. They considered themselves to be animals, nearly allied to the beaver, but greater than the beaver, 'because,' they said, 'the beaver builds houses like us, and he is very cunning; true, but we can catch the beaver, and he cannot catch us, therefore we are greater than he.'

They thought that when they died, that was the last of them. While thus ignorant, it was nothing uncommon for them to bury the very old and the very young alive, because, they said, 'these cannot take care of themselves, and we cannot take care of them, and they had better die.'

"The missionaries had an arduous labor before them. They commenced by gaining the good-will of the inhabitants, by means of small presents, and by manifesting great interest in their welfare, in attendance upon the sick, and by giving the poor creatures food, seeds, and instruction as to farming.

"The Indians could not help seeing that no hopes of temporal or personal benefit induced the missionaries thus to labor among them.

"The missionaries told them that they had a Creator, and that he was good. They told them of their Saviour, and of the manner of addressing him by prayer. To this they listened, and believed.

"The people look up to the Father, and love him. They say that if the Father should go away, they would die.

"Before the advent of the missionaries, the inhabitants, though totally destitute of religious ideas, still believed that evil and bad luck emanated from a fabulous old woman or sorceress. They were great believers in charms or medicine. Every man had his particular medicine or charm, and from it they expected either good or ill. With some it would be the mouse, with others the deer, buffalo, elk, salmon, bear, &c.; and whichever it was, the savage would carry a portion of it constantly with him. The tail of a mouse, or the fur, hoof, claw, feather, fin, or scale, of whatever it might be, became the amulet. When a young man grew up, he was not yet considered a man until he had discovered his medicine. His father would send him to the top of a

high mountain in the neighborhood of the present mission; here he was obliged to remain without food until he had dreamed of an animal; the first one so dreamed about becoming his medicine for life. Of course, anxiety, fatigue, cold, and fasting, would render his sleep troubled, and replete with dreams. In a short time he would have dreamed of what he wanted, and return to his home a man.

"The missionaries say that these Indians are industrious, and not lazy, as compared to other Indians; that they are willing to work; but the land is so poor, and so little of it is susceptible of cultivation, that they cannot farm enough.

"The mission farm, as already stated, contains about one hundred and sixty acres. This is kept up for the natives, as but a few acres would be amply sufficient for the missionaries. Each Indian who wishes it, is allowed a certain amount of land to cultivate for his own use, and is provided with tools and seeds.

"Before reaching the mission of St. Ignatius, Dr. Suckley found four lodges of the Pends-d'Oreilles about half a mile above the outlet of Lake Deboey. These lodges were all built after the fashion of the Sioux lodge, with the single difference that they were covered with mats of reeds, instead of skins. These mats are made of rushes laid parallel, and fastened together at their ends. For convenience in travelling, the mats are rolled into cylindrical bundles, and are thus easily carried in canoes. Dr. Suckley's provisions being out, he concluded to lodge all night with All-ol-stargh, the head of the encampment. The other lodges were principally occupied by his children and grand-children. 'Shortly after our entrance,' says Dr. Suckley, 'All-ol-stargh rung a little bell; directly the lodge was filled with the inhabitants of the camp, men, women, and children, who immediately got on their knees, and repeated, or rather chanted, a long prayer,

in their own language. The repetition of a few pious sentences, an invocation, and a hymn, closed the exercises. In these the squaws took as active a part as the men. The promptness, fervency, and earnestness, all showed, was pleasing to contemplate. The participation of the squaws in the exercises, and the apparent footing of equality between them and the men, so much unlike their condition in other savage tribes, appear remarkable.' "

The following trait, mentioned by Mr. Doty in his report, attests their good faith and decision of character:

"On the 1st of November, six Pends-d'Oreille Indians came to this post, and delivered up all the horses that were stolen. It appears that they were taken by two young Pends-d'Oreilles, and run to the Pends-d'Oreille camp, then hunting beyond the Muscle-Shell, under the command of a chief of that nation, 'Alexander.' The horses were recognized, by the stamps, as belonging to the whites, and the young men confessed having stolen them at this post. A council was held, and it was determined that it was a great sin to steal horses from the white men who were friendly to them; that the wishes of the 'Great Soldier Chief,' who had been at St. Mary's, were known to them, and they had promised compliance with them; that stealing these horses would give the Pends-d'Oreilles the name of liars and triflers; that they had always borne a good name, and were ashamed to have mean things said of them now; therefore the horses must be taken back by the great chief and five principal men of the tribe. Accordingly, they came boldly to the fort and delivered up the horses, without asking any reward, but, on the contrary, expressing much sorrow and shame that they had been taken.

"Thus the six Indians proved themselves not only honest, but brave in the highest degree, coming, as they did, five

days and nights into an enemy's country, simply to do an act of justice to strangers. They remained here two days, and on departing were accompanied by Mr. Clark and myself fifteen or twenty miles on their journey."

In regard to the Flat-Heads, the governor says:

"Lieut. Mullan, in his journal of September 20, relates the following incident, illustrative of their noble character: 'We had to-night a great luxury, in a string of mountain trout, brought into camp by one of our Flat-Head friends. Our Indians displayed, on this occasion, a trait worthy of notice. They were without meat or any thing to eat. We were without meat, but had a little flour left from our small stock of provisions. These being the first fish caught by any of the party, they insisted on our taking them. This we refused, but they insisted, until we were compelled to accept them.' He continues: 'I cannot say too much of the three noble men who were with us. They were firm, upright, reliable men, and, in addition thereto, entertained a religious belief, which they never violated. They did not partake of a meal without asking the blessing of God; they never rose in the morning or retired at night without offering a prayer. They all knew the country well, and were excellent guides and hunters. When they could not find fresh meat, they accepted the remnants from our scanty table with the greatest contentedness.'

The Flat-Heads recognize Victor as their chief, an Indian of the same name being the chief of the lower Pends-d'Oreilles. These two tribes usually accompany each other in their great hunting expeditions east of the Rocky Mountains. The heroism of the Flat-Heads in battle, and their good faith towards others, have been the theme of praise, both from priest and layman."

Speaking of the Cœur-d'Alènes, the governor says:

"The Cœur-d'Alène Indians are under-estimated by all the authorities. They have some seventy lodges, and number about five hundred inhabitants. They are much indebted to the good Fathers for making considerable progress in agriculture. They have abandoned polygamy, have been taught the rudiments of Christianity, and are greatly improved in morals and in the comforts of life. It is indeed extraordinary what the Fathers have done at the Cœur-d'Alène mission. It is on the Cœur-d'Alène river, about thirty miles from the base of the mountains, and some ten miles above the Cœur-d'Alène lake.

"They have a splendid church, nearly finished by the labors of the Fathers, brothers, and Indians; a large barn; a horse-mill for flour; a small range of buildings for the accommodation of the priests and brothers; a store-room; a milk or dairy room; a cook-room, and good arrangements for their pigs and cattle. They are putting up a new range of quarters, and the Indians have some twelve comfortable log-cabins. The church was designed by the superior skill of the mission, Père Ravalli, a man of skill as an architect, and undoubtedly, judging from his well-thumbed books, of various accomplishments. Père Gazzoli showed me his several designs for the altar, all of them characterized by good taste, and harmony of proportion. The church, as a specimen of architecture, would do credit to any one, and has been faithfully sketched by our artist, Mr. Stanley. The massive timbers supporting the altar were from larch-trees five feet in diameter, and were raised to their place by the Indians, with the aid simply of a pulley and a rope.

"They have a large, cultivated field, of some two hundred acres, and a prairie of from two to three thousand acres. They own a hundred pigs, eight yokes of oxen, twenty cows, and a liberal proportion of horses, mules, and young animals.

"The Indians have learned to plough, sow, till the soil generally, milk cows (with both hands), and do all the duties incident to a farm. They are, some of them, expert wood-cutters; and I saw at work, getting in the harvest, some thirty or forty Indians. They are thinking of cutting out a good trail to St. Mary's valley, over the Cœur-d'Alène mountains (on the route passed over by me). They need agricultural implements and seeds.

"The country generally, on both sides of the Cœur-d'Alène river and lake, is rolling and beautiful. It is interspersed with many small prairies, all affording excellent grazing, and most of them adapted to crops. The rolling country could be easily cleared, and would yield excellent wheat and vegetables. I have no question that all the country, from the falls of the Cœur-d'Alène to some distance above the mission, and thence to near Clark's Fork, a region of three or four thousand square miles, is adapted to grazing and culture. A small portion will be overflowed by the melting of the mountain snows, and another portion will be occupied by the mountain spurs or isolated peaks, capable simply of furnishing timber and fuel.

"The Fathers state that a better site for the mission is furnished by a river flowing from the southeast into the western end of the Cœur-d'Alène lake, and called by them St. Joseph's river. It is said to be larger than the Cœur-d'Alène river, to have many prairies along its banks, and the country generally to abound in wood, grass, and water.

"On the return of the Indians from the field above spoken of, I talked to them in these words:

"'I am glad to see you, and to find that you are under such good direction. I have come four times as far as you go to hunt the buffalo, and have come with directions from the Great Father to see you, to talk with you, and to do all

I can for your welfare. I see cultivated fields, a church, houses, cattle, and the fruits of the soil—the works of your own hands. The Great Father will be delighted to hear this, and will certainly assist you. Go on; and every family will have a house and a patch of ground, and every one will be well clothed. I have talked with the Black-Feet, who promise to make peace with all the Indian tribes. Listen to the Good Father and to the Good Brothers who labor for your good.'"

These details are drawn from the Message of the President of the United States to Congress, 1854–5, p. 416.

Accept, dear Father, my respectful homage, and believe me

Your devoted servant and brother in Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XXII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Indians of the Rocky Mountains.

St. Francis Xavier, Feb. 4, 1856.

Reverend Father:

I have just received a letter from Father Adrian Hoeken, dated Oct. 18th, at the united camp of the Flat-Heads and Pends-d'Oreilles, in the region of the great plains, east of the Rocky Mountains. The Indians had gone there to attend a peace council, held by order of the United States Government. Father Hoeken attended, at the express request of Governor Stevens of Washington Territory, who shows every regard to the Fathers, and whose reports to the President evince the lively interest which he feels in the improvement of the material condition of the Indians under our care.

The Black-Feet, Crows, Flat-Heads, Pends-d'Oreilles, Koetenays, and a great number of chiefs of other tribes attended the council. It is to be hoped that the stipulations of the new treaty will be ratified by government. On the one hand, the Indians promise to remain at peace with each other; on the other, the whites and the government to aid them by subsidies in educating their children, and by farming implements to encourage them to leave their nomade life and settle in a convenient spot on their own lands. It is to be hoped that the council will succeed in realizing this laudable plan.

Father Hoeken tells me that the Indians of our missions west of the Rocky Mountains (the Flat-Heads, Pends-d'Oreilles, Pointed Hearts, Koetenays, Skoyelpies, or Kettle-Falls Indians), continue, by their regular and religious conduct, to give the missionaries great consolation. He speaks also of the good dispositions of the Crows, Black-Feet, and others east of the mountains. These Indians earnestly solicit missionaries. Colonel Cummings, superintendent of Indian Affairs, who presided at the great Indian council, assured me, on his recent return to St. Louis, that all the tribes of the Upper Missouri are devoted to us. He would gladly use his influence with government for the success of our missions among them. Before settting out for the council, he expressed the wish that I should accompany him to the great Indian assembly.

In a letter from Father Congiato, dated at Santa Clara, Nov. 29, that superior of the mission of California and Oregon, speaks of his visit to the missions in the mountains. It lasted three months. The following is an extract:

"The Fathers do much good in that remote region. Like his venerable brother, who died on the Missouri in 1851, Father Hoeken does the work of several men. He has succeeded in uniting three nations and a part of the Flat-Heads to live together under his spiritual direction.

"All was going on wonderfully well when I was in Oregon; now all is on fire. The Indians who live on the banks of the Columbia, from Walla Walla to the Dalles, have joined the Indians of northern California to make war on the Americans or whites, and commit great depredations. One of the Oblates (Father Pandory) has been massacred.* The last tidings which I received from the mission of St. Paul at

* This was a false report.—Ed.

Colville, inform me that your Indians express their horror for the excesses committed by the Indians, and show no disposition to join them in the war. Pray for your fellow missionaries in Oregon."

Several papers in this country ascribe the origin of this war to the cruelties perpetrated by some whites on a peaceful and tranquil band of Indians. I do not think that our Indians will take the least part in the difficulties which have arisen between the Americans and the Indians of the Columbia. They will doubtless follow the advice of their missionaries, who will divert them from such a great danger and so sad a misfortune. Moreover, they are at some distance from the actual seat of war, and have had but trifling intercourse, if any, with the hostile tribes.

Do not forget me in your prayers, and obtain prayers for the wretched. I have just received a second letter from Father Hoecken from the Flat-Head village of St. Ignatius. He has several nations there. The conversions among the Indians have been very consoling and numerous in the course of last year.

In the name of all the Indians east and west of the mountains, he implores me to revisit them. The Black-Feet, Crows, Assiniboins, Sioux, and others, incessantly implore our aid. These nations are still very numerous. They number over 70,000 souls. Religious should, before all else, be children of obedience. It is the affair of our superiors. We shall never cease to aid them by our prayers, and commend them in a special manner to the remembrance of the pious.

Yours &c.

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XXIII

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

The Flat-Heads.

University of St. Louis, April, 1856.

Rev. and dear Father:

I inclose you a letter of Rev. Adrian Hoeken, brother of Christian, whose death you announced in your volume of 1853, p. 394.

Father Adrian Hoeken was one of my earliest travelling companions in the missionary journeys to the Flat-Heads. He has ever labored, and still continues to labor here, with the greatest zeal and the most plentiful results.

I have this month dispatched a perfect cargo to him, by a steamer which was about to ascend the Missouri. It consisted of tools, clothes, and provisions of all kinds. The boat will go 2,200 miles; then the goods will be transported by a barge, which will have to stem the rapid current about 600 miles; there will then remain 300 miles by land with wagons, through mountain defiles: so that the objects shipped in April can arrive among the Flat-Heads only in the month of October.

We hope that other evangelical laborers will soon go to assist Father Hoeken. The savages request missionaries. We shall perceive that this mission and that of the Pends-d'Oreilles continue to flourish.

FLAT-HEAD CAMP, IN THE BLACK-FEET COUNTRY, Oct. 18, 1855.

REV. AND DEAR FATHER:

You will thank God with me for the consoling increase he has given, through the intercession of Mary, to the missions which you began in those remote parts. During the many years that I have passed among the Kalispels, though my labors have not been light and my trials have been numerous enough, God has given me in abundance the consolations of the missionary, in the lively faith and sincere piety of our neophytes. We have found means to build a beautiful church, which has excited the admiration of even Lieutenant Mullan, of the United States army. This church is sufficiently large to contain the whole tribe, and on Sundays and festival days, when our Indians have adorned it with what ornaments of green boughs and wild flowers the woods and prairies supply; when they sing in it their devout hymns with fervor during the Holy Sacrifice, it might serve as a subject of edification and an example to quicken the zeal of many an old Christian congregation. There is among our converts a universal and very tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, a most evident mark that the Faith has taken deep root in their souls. Every day, morning and evening, the families assemble in their lodges to recite the rosary in common, and daily they beg of Mary to thank God for them for having called them from the wild life of the forest, spent as it is in ignorance, rapine, and bloodshed, to the blessings of the true religion and its immortal hopes.

The Kalispels have sustained a great loss in the death of their pious chief, Loyola, with whose euphonious Indian name, *Etsowish-simmegee-itshin*, "The Grizzly Bear Erect," you are familiar. Ever since you baptized this excellent Indian chieftain, he was always steadfast in the faith. He

daily made progress in virtue, and became more fervent in the practices of our holy religion. He was a father to his people, firm in repressing their disorders, and zealous in exhorting them to be faithful to the lessons of the missionaries. In the severe trials to which Divine Providence subjected his virtue in his latter years, when within a short space of time he lost his wife and three of his children, he bore the heavy stroke with the edifying resignation of a Christian. During his last illness, of several weeks' duration, he seemed more anxious to do something still for the promotion of piety among his people, than to have his own great sufferings alleviated. His death, which occurred on the 6th of April, 1854, was lamented by the Indians with such tokens of sincere grief, as I have never before witnessed. There was not that false wailing over his tomb which Indian usage is said to prescribe for a departed chieftain; they wept over him with heartfelt and heartrending grief, as if each one had lost the best of fathers, and their grief for the good Loyola has not died away even at this day. Never had I thought our Indians capable of so much affection.

As Loyola, contrary to Indian customs, had not designated his successor, a new chief was to be chosen after his death. The election, to which all had prepared themselves by prayer, to lead them to a proper choice, ended in an almost unanimous voice for Victor, a brave hunter, whom you as yet must remember as a man remarkable for the generosity of his disposition. His inauguration took place amid great rejoicing. All the warriors, in their great costume, marched to his wigwam, and ranging themselves around it, discharged their muskets, after which each one went up to him to pledge his allegiance, and testify his affection by a hearty shaking of hands. During the whole day, numerous parties came to the mission-house to tell the Fathers how much satisfaction

they felt at having a chief whose goodness had long since won the hearts of all. Victor alone seemed sad. He dreaded the responsibility of the chieftainship, and thought he should be unable to maintain the good effected in the tribe by the excellent chief Loyola.

In the following winter, when there was a great scarcity, and almost a famine among the Kalispels, Victor gave an affecting proof of his generous self-denying charity. He distributed his own provisions through the camp, hardly reserving for himself enough to sustain life, so that on his return from the annual chase, when yet at a considerable distance from the village, he fell exhausted on the ground, and had to be carried by his companions, to whom on that very day he had given all the food that had been sent up to him for his own use.

The Indian is often described as a being devoid of kind feelings, incapable of gratitude, and breathing only savage hatred and murderous revenge; but, in reality, he has, in his untamed, uncultured nature, as many generous impulses as the man of any other race, and he only needs the softening influence of our holy religion to bring it out in its most touching forms. We need no other proof of it than the grateful remembrance of all the Indians of their late chief Loyola, the generous character of Victor, and the affectionate feelings of all our converted tribes for their missionaries, and especially for you, to whom they look up as to their great benefactor, because you were the first to bring them the good tidings of salvation.

Among our dear Flat-Heads, Michael Insula, or Red Feather, or as he is commonly called on account of his small stature, "The Little Chief," is a remarkable instance of the power which the Church has of developing the most amiable virtues in the fierce Indian. He unites in his person the

greatest bravery with the tenderest piety and the gentlest manners. Known amid his warriors by the red feather which he wears, his approach is enough to put to flight the prowling bands of Crows and Black-Feet, that have frequently infested the Flat-Head territory. He is well known and much beloved by the whites, who have had occasion to deal with him, as a man of sound judgment, strict integrity, and one on whose fidelity they can implicitly rely. A keen discerner of the characters of men, he loves to speak especially of those whites, distinguished for their fine qualities, that have visited him, and often mentions with pleasure the sojourn among them of Colonel Robert Campbell, of St. Louis, and of Major Fitzpatrick, whom he adopted, in accordance with Indian ideas of courtesy, as his brothers. He has preserved all his first fervor of devotion, and now, as when you knew him, one can hardly ever enter his wigwam in the morning or evening without finding him with his rosary in his hands, absorbed in prayer. He cherishes a most affectionate remembrance of you, and of the day he was baptized; he longs ardently to see you once more before his death, and but yesterday he asked me, when and by what road you would return. In speaking thus, he expressed the desire of all our Indians, who all equally regret your long absence.

It was proposed, during the summer of 1854, to begin a new mission about one hundred and ninety miles northeast of the Kalispels, not far from the Flat-Head Lake, about fifty miles from the old mission of St. Mary's, among the Flat-Heads, where a convenient site had been pointed out to us by the Kalispel chief, Alexander, your old friend, who often accompanied you in your travels in the Rocky Mountains. Having set out from the Kalispel mission on the 28th of August, 1854, I arrived at the place designated on the 24th of September, and found it such as it had been represented—a

beautiful region, evidently fertile, uniting a useful as well as pleasing variety of woodland and prairie, lake and river—the whole crowned in the distance by the white summit of the mountains, and sufficiently rich withal in fish and game. I shall never forget the emotions of hope and fear that filled my heart, when for the first time I celebrated mass in this lonely spot, in the open air, in the presence of a numerous band of Kalispels, who looked up to me, under God, for their temporal and spiritual welfare in this new home. The place was utterly uninhabited,—several bands of Indians live within a few days' travel, whom you formerly visited, and where you baptized many, while others still remained pagan. I was in hope of gathering these around me, and God has been pleased to bless an undertaking begun for his glory, even beyond my expectation. In a few weeks we had erected several frame buildings, a chapel, two houses, carpenter's and blacksmith's shops; wigwams had sprung up at the same time all around in considerable numbers, and morning and evening you might still have heard the sound of the axe and the hammer, and have seen new-comers rudely putting together lodges. About Easter of this year, over one thousand Indians, of different tribes, from the Upper Koetenays and Flat-Bow Indians, Pends-d'Oreilles, Flat-Heads, and Mountain Kalispels, who had arrived in succession during the winter, when they heard of the arrival of the long-desired Black-gown, made this place their permanent residence. All these Indians have manifested the best dispositions. Besides a large number of children baptized in the course of the year, I have had the happiness to baptize, before Christmas and Easter, upwards of one hundred and fifty adults of the Koetenay tribe, men of great docility and artlessness of character, who told me that ever since you had been among them, some years ago, they had abandoned the practice of gam-

bling and other vices, and cherished the hope of being instructed one day in the religion of the Great Spirit.

By the beginning of spring, our good Brother McGean had cut some eighteen thousand rails; and placed under cultivation a large field, which promises to yield a very plentiful harvest. Lieutenant Mullan, who spent the winter among the Flat-Heads of St. Mary's, has procured me much valuable aid in founding this mission, and has all along taken a lively interest in its prosperity. I know not how to acquit the debt of gratitude I owe this most excellent officer, and I can only pray, poor missionary as I am, that the Lord may repay his generosity and kindness a hundredfold in blessings of time and eternity. We are still in want of a great many useful and important articles—indeed, of an absolute necessity in the establishing of this new mission. I am confident, many friends of the poor Indians may be found in the United States, who will most willingly contribute their mite in such a charitable undertaking—we will be most grateful to them, and our good neophytes, in whose behalf I make the appeal, will not cease to pray for their kind benefactors.

Please make arrangements with the American Fur Company to have goods brought up by the Missouri river to Fort Benton, whence I could get them conveyed in wagons across the mountains to the missionary station.

The Right Rev. Magloire Blanchet, bishop of Nesqualy, who in his first visit confirmed over six hundred Indians, although he arrived unexpectedly, when a great many families had gone to their hunting grounds, among the Kalispels and our neighboring missions, intended to give confirmation here this summer. I was very desirous of the arrival of this pious prelate, who has done so much good, by his fervent exhortations, to strengthen our neophytes in the faith. It had already been agreed upon that a party of Indians should go to

meet him as far as the village of the Sacred Heart, among the Cœur-d'Alènes, about two hundred miles from St. Ignatius' mission, when our plans were broken up by a message from Governor Stevens, summoning all our Indians to a council, to be held some thirty miles off, in St. Mary's or Bitter Root valley, at a place called Hellgate, whence a number of chiefs and warriors were to accompany him to a Grand Council of Peace among the Black-Feet. I was absent on a visit to our brethren among the Cœur-d'Alènes, the Skoyelpies, and other tribes, when I received an invitation from the governor to be present at the councils. I had found, in my visit, all our missions rich in good works and conversions, though very poor in the goods of this world—all the Fathers and Brothers were in the enjoyment of excellent health. Father Joset, among the Skoyelpies, at the Kettle Falls of the Columbia, had baptized a large number of adults and children. During the late prevalence of the small-pox, there were hardly any deaths from it among the neophytes, as most of them had been previously vaccinated by us, while the Spokans and other unconverted Indians, who said the "Medicine (vaccine) of the Fathers, was a poison, used only to kill them," were swept away by hundreds. This contrast, of course, had the effect of increasing the influence of the missionaries.

With mingled feelings of joy at all the good effected, and of sorrow at the miserable death of so many of God's creatures—thankful to God for all his blessings, and submissive to the mysterious judgments of his Providence, I set out, accompanied by my neophytes, for the Black-Feet territory. The grand council took place in the vicinity of Fort Benton. Our Indians, who were in great expectation of seeing you with Majors Cummings and Culbertson, were indeed much disappointed at not finding you. The Black-Feet, although

they are still much given to thieving, and have committed more depredations than ever, during the last spring, are very anxious to see you again, and to have missionaries among them. Governor Stevens, who has always shown himself a real father and well affected towards our Indians, has expressed a determination to do all in his power to forward the success of the missions. The establishment of a mission among the Black-Feet would be the best, and indeed the only means to make them observe the treaty of peace which has just been concluded. Until missionaries are sent, I intend, from time to time, to visit the Black-Feet, so as to do for them what good I may, and prepare the way for the conversion of the whole tribe. I hope a new mission may soon be realized, for it is absolutely necessary, both for their own sake and for the peace of our converted Indians on the western side of the Rocky Mountains.

From all I have seen, and from all I have learned during this last trip, I may say, that the Crows and all the tribes on the upper waters of the Missouri, as well as the various bands of Black-Feet, where so many children have already been regenerated in the holy waters of baptism, by you and by Father Point, are anxious to have the Black-gowns permanently among them, and to learn "the prayer of the Great Spirit." The field seems ripe for the harvest. Let us pray that God may soon send zealous laborers to this far-distant and abandoned region.

The chief, Alexander, the Kalispel, Michael Insula, and the other Flat-Head chieftains, the leaders of the Koetenay and Flat-Bow bands, and all our neophytes, beg to be remembered in your good prayers—they, on their part, never forget to pray for you. Please remember me.

Your devoted brother in Christ,

ADRIAN HOEKEN, S. J.

The following extract from a letter of Rev. T. Congiato, superior of the Missions of the Society of Jesus in California and Oregon, written since the commencement of Indian hostilities, and dated Santa Clara, 29th of last November, will perhaps prove not uninteresting to those who take an interest in the success of our Catholic mission. Rev. T. Congiato writes:

"On my return from our missions among the Rocky Mountains, which it took me three months to visit, I found here a letter of yours full of edifying news, for which I am very thankful. Our college here is progressing. The number of members of our Society is on the increase, and reaches nearly forty. All over California, our holy religion is making great progress, and priests and churches are multiplying. In the Oregon missions our Fathers are doing much good. At the mountains, Father Adrian Hoeken, a worthy brother of Father Christian Hoeken, the apostle and zealous missionary among the Potawatomies, who died in 1851, while on his way to the Upper Missouri tribes, has succeeded in bringing three nations and a part of the Flat-Heads to live under his spiritual guidance. Every thing seemed to be going on well when I left Oregon, but now the country appears on fire. All the Indians living on the banks of the Colombia, from Walla Walla down to the Dalles mountains, together with the Indians of North California, are in arms against the whites, and commit great depredations. One of the Father Oblates, Father Pandory, has been killed. Please pray, and make others pray for our brethren in Oregon. The last accounts I received from St. Paul's mission, at Colville, stated that our Indians disapproved highly of the depredations committed by the other Indians, and showed no disposition whatever to join them."

It may, indeed, be confidently anticipated that the Indians

of the Catholic missions of the mountains who have always shown great kindness to the whites, and have always lived in peace with them, will continue to listen to the good counsel and advice of their missionaries, and will abstain from any act of hostility. Moreover, they are removed from the seat of war, and have seldom had any intercourse with the hostile tribes. Most respectfully, dear sir,

Your obedient servant,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XXIV.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

The Flat-Heads, etc.

University of St. Louis, August 4, 1857.

Rev. and dear Father:

You will find inclosed in this letter a recent letter from Rev. Adrian Hoeken, S. J. I hope that it will merit a place in your *Précis Historiques*. In Holland I am sure it will afford pleasure.

* * * * * *

The expression of the sentiments of the poor Indians in my regard, fill me with confusion, and I would not have sent the letter entire, but that you insisted on my sending each piece entire. For the rest, we must never forget, that these wretched Indians, deprived of every thing, and neglected by other men, experience an excessive joy for the least benefit, and feel grateful to any one who treats them with a little attention. A great lesson for our fellow-countrymen. Among those whom infidel and revolutionary writers in Belgium style *savages* and *barbarians*, you could not find one enough so to figure in the bands of Jemappes, or even in the rioters of Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, and Mons. Here the Black-gown is respected, loved. The Indians perceive in him the emblem of the happiness that the missionary brings him in presenting him the torch of faith.

Letter of Rev. Father Adrian Hoeken.

Mission of the Flat-Heads, April 15, 1857.

Rev. and beloved Father:

Before entering into a few details, I beg you to excuse the want of order in this letter. Much time has elapsed since I had the pleasure of receiving news from you, who have so many titles to my love and gratitude, and whose name is frequently on the lips, and always in the hearts, of each of the inhabitants of this remote region. Your letter of the 27th and 28th of March reached us towards the end of August, it was read, or rather devoured, with avidity, so dear was it to our hearts. It was remitted to us by our chief, Alexander, who accompanied Mr. R. H. Lansdale to the Cœur-d'Alènes. Scarcely had we cast a glance at the address, and recognized your handwriting, than, not being able to contain our joy, all, with one consent, cried out, "Father de Smet! Father de Smet!" You cannot imagine the delight your letters afford us and our dear Indians. God be praised! Your name will be ever held in benediction among these poor children of the Rocky Mountains. Ah! how often they ask me these questions: "When, oh when! will Father de Smet come to us? Will he ever again ascend the Missouri? Is it true that he will not come to Fort Benton this fall?" These, and many other similar questions, show how dear to them is the remembrance of their father in Christ; of him who first broke to them the bread of eternal life, and showed them the true way to happiness on earth and bliss hereafter. It is not strange, then, that your letters should have been read several times, and that every time they gave us new pleasure and excited new interest.

I can never cease admiring Divine Providence, which presides over all, and which in particular takes care of our be-

loved missions. Among the unnumbered proofs of its continual protection, your assistance in our late distress, and the liberality of our benefactors, are not less remarkable, nor less worthy of our gratitude. Our storehouses were empty, and the war between the Indians nearest the seaboard took away all hope of procuring other resources. Never, never was charity more appropriate, nor received with greater joy. May Héaven prolong your days and those of our benefactors! May you continue to foster the same interest towards us that, until the present moment, you have never ceased to testify! Yes, beloved father, let the recollection of our missions be ever equally dear to you. They are the fruit of your own heroic zeal, fatigues, and labors. Ah! never forget our dear Indians; they are *your* children in Christ, the offspring of *your* boundless charity and your unwearied zeal!

During the months of June, July, and August, disease raged cruelly in our camp, as well as in that of the Flat-Heads. However, there were few victims of its terrible attacks.

Father Ménétrey, my co-laborer, visited the Flat-Heads, where he had been asked for by the chief, Fidelis Teltella (*Thunder*), whose son was dangerously ill. Later, I visited them myself in their camash prairies. A second time, in the opening of the month of June, I remained some days with them, at Hellgate, and I distributed medicines to all those who had been seized with the epidemic, and a little wheat flour to each family. Victor, the great chief, Ambrose, Moses, Fidelis, Adolphus, and several others, came here of their own accord, to fulfil their religious duties. Since last spring there has been a notable amelioration in the whole nation. Ambrose has effected the most good. He had convened several assemblies, in order to arrange and pay off old debts, to repair wrongs, etc. The Indians appear,

however, very reluctant to part with their lands; they will scarcely hear of the dispositions to be taken.

Father Ravalli labored as much as he could to pacify the tribes which reside towards the west, namely: the Cayuses, the Yakamans, the Opelouses, etc. As our neophytes hitherto have taken no part in the war, the country is as safe for us as ever. We can go freely wheresoever we desire. No one is ignorant that the Black-gowns are not enemies; those, at least, who are among the Indians. Almost all the Cœur-d'Alènes, in order to shield themselves from the hostilities of the Indians, and to avoid all relations with them, are gone bison-hunting. A few days since, Father Joset wrote me that Father Ravalli had already written to him several weeks before: "I fear a general rising among the Indians, towards the commencement of spring. Let us pray, and let us engage others to pray with us, in order to avert this calamity. I think that it would be well to add to the ordinary prayers of the mass, the collect for peace."

If the less well-intentioned Indians from the lower lands would keep within their own territory, and if the whites, the number of whom is daily augmenting in St. Mary's valley, could act with moderation, and conduct themselves prudently, I am convinced that soon the whole country would be at peace, and that not a single Indian would henceforward imbrue his hands in the blood of a white stranger. Were I authorized to suggest a plan, I would propose to have all the upper lands evacuated by the whites, and form of it a territory exclusively of Indians; afterwards I would lead there all the Indians of the inferior portion, such as the Nez-Percés, the Cayuses, the Yakomas, the Cœur-d'Alènes, and the Spokans. Well-known facts lead me to believe that this plan, with such superior advantages, might be effected, by means of missions, in the space of two or three years.

Our Indians here are doing well. Last spring we sowed about fifty bushels of wheat, and planted a quantity of potatoes, cabbages, and turnips. God has graciously blessed our labors and our fields. Here all generally like agriculture. We give the seeds gratis to everybody. Our ploughs and our tools are also free to be used by them. We even lend our horses and oxen to the poorest among the Indians, and we grind all their grain gratuitously. But our mill, which goes by horse-power, is very small, and we are not able to build another.

Mr. R. H. Lansdale, agent of the government, a very just and upright man, has assumed his functions at the Plum-trees, a place situated quite near the place where we cross the river, a few miles from this. We gave him all the assistance of which we were capable. I had indulged the hope that the government would come to our aid, at least for the building of a small church; but so far my expectations have been frustrated. Alas! are we never to cease deploring the loss of our little church among the Kalispels? Several of these latter-named, and among others, Victor, on seeing the chapel, formerly so dear to them, but now forsaken and neglected, shed tears of regret.

When, oh when! shall the oppressed Indian find a poor corner of earth on which he may lead a peaceful life, serving and loving his God in tranquillity, and preserving the ashes of his ancestors without fear of beholding them profaned and trampled beneath the feet of an unjust usurper?

Several among the Kalispels, Victor and others, already have possessions here. However, they have not yet renounced those which they own in the country lower down. Twelve very poor habitations are the beginning of our town called St. Ignatius. Our little abode, although very modest, is sufficiently comfortable. To any other than you, this

word *comfortable* might sound singular; but you, Reverend Father, who understand perfectly what it means when applied to a poor missionary, will comprehend the relative application of the word. Our community numbers six members. Father Joseph Ménétrey, who is missionary, prefect of our chapel, and inspector in chief of our fields, etc.; Brother McGean, farmer; Brother Vincent Magri, dispenser, carpenter, and miller; Brother Joseph Spegt, blacksmith, baker, and gardener; Brother Francis Huybrechts, carpenter and sacristan.

I intend going to Colville after the harvest and during the absence of the Indians.

Father Ménétrey, of his own free will, went to Fort Benton with a pair of horses. The distance by the great road is 294 miles. He took horses because we could with difficulty spare our oxen, and also because, according to information received from Mr. Lansdale, the road is impassable to oxen which have not, like horses, iron shoes. Father Ménétrey arrived at the fort on the 17th of September, and was very favorably received by the occupants; but he was obliged to wait some time for the boats. He speaks with high eulogiums of the Black-Feet, and regrets that he has not jurisdiction in that part of the mountains. He returned on the 12th of November.

How express to you, Rev. Father, the joy that filled our hearts, when we opened your letters and the different cases which you had the charity to send us? We each and all wept with grateful joy! In vain, the night following, I strove to calm the emotions that these missives, as well as the liberality of our benefactors, had produced in my heart; I could not close my eyes. All the community, yes, the whole camp, participated in my delight. In unison we rendered thanks to Divine Providence, and that day was a perfect hol-

iday. The next day, having a little recovered from my excitement, I was ashamed of my weakness. You who know what it is to be a missionary; you who know so well his privations, his trials, his pangs, you will easily forgive my excessive sensibility.

I had agreed with Father Congiato that he would send your Reverence my lists, as well as the money that he might allow me. I was bolder in soliciting your charity and your benevolence in our favor, because I knew the love and interest that you bear to our missions; and that, on the other hand, I only executed a plan that yourself had conceived and suggested, when, in consideration of the circumstances, it would have appeared to every one else illusory and incapable of execution.

Scarcely had Father Ménétrey gone than I received a letter from Father Congiato, in which he said to me: "If you think that your supplies can be furnished at a more reasonable price from Missouri, order them thence, I will pay the cost. Write on this subject to Rev. Father De Smet." Had I received this letter somewhat later, I scarcely know what would have been my decision; for it is very doubtful that we should have been able to find any one who would return to Fort Benton. I entreat you, be so good as to excuse the trouble that we give you; our extraordinary situation is the sole excuse that I can offer in favor of our importunity. A thousand thanks to you, and to all our benefactors who concurred so generously in the support of our missions. I also thank our kind brethren in St. Louis, for the very interesting letters that they had the kindness to write me. Receive too, our grateful sentiments, Rev. Father, for the catalogues of the different provinces, the classical books, Shea's Catholic Missions, the works of controversy, etc., etc. I should never conclude did I attempt to enumerate all your gifts, which we

were so overjoyed to receive. Brother Joseph was beside himself with gladness when his eyes fell on the little packages of seeds, the files, scissors, and other similar objects. Accept, in fine, our thanks for the piece of broadcloth you sent us; by this favor we continue to be "*Black-gowns.*" Ah! with my whole heart I wish that you could have seen us as we were opening the boxes. Each object excited new cries of joy, and augmented our grateful love for the donors. All arrived in good order. The snuff had got a little mixed with the clover-seed, but no matter; my nose is not very delicate. It is the first donation sent into these mountains, at least since I have been here. We bless God, who watches over all of his children with so much care and liberality, even over those who appear to be the most forsaken.

On the following day I sent Father Joset his letters. I found an opportunity that very day.

It would have been very agreeable to me to receive a copy of all your letters published since 1836. The portraits were very dear to me. I could not recognize Father Verdin's, but Brother Joseph knew it at the first glance. Yours was also recognized at once by a great number of the Indians, and on seeing it they shouted "Pikek an!" It made the tour of the village, and yesterday again, an inhabitant of Koetenay came to me with the sole intention of "paying a visit to Father De Smet." This did them an immense good, only seeing the portrait of him who was the first to bear them the light of faith in these regions, still overshadowed with the darkness of moral death; and who first dissipated the mists in which they and their progenitors during untold ages had been enveloped. Believe me, reverend father, not a day passes, without their prayers ascending to heaven for you.

In what manner can we testify our gratitude in regard to the two benefactors who so generously charged themselves

with the care of transporting and delivering to us our cases without consenting to accept the slightest recompense? Undoubtedly they will reap a large share in the sacrifices and prayers that daily rise to Heaven for all our benefactors, and which are with a grateful heart and the remembrance of their beneficence towards us, the only tokens of our thankfulness that we can offer them. How noble the sentiment which prompted them gratuitously to burden themselves and their boats, with the charitable gifts destined by the faithful, to the destitute missionaries of the Indians! Heaven, who knows our poverty, will reward them with better gifts than we could have imagined suitable to their liberality.

The package destined for Michael Insula, the "*Little Chief*," lies here for the present. He has not yet opened it. The good man is abroad on a hunting excursion; but we expect him back in a few days. I doubt not that he will be very sensible to these marks of friendship, or, as he usually expresses it, "these marks of fraternity." He set out from here, when he had harvested the grain he had sowed. Always equally good, equally happy, a fervent Christian, he is daily advancing in virtue and in perfection. He has a young son, Louis Michael, whom he teaches to call me *papa*. It is a real pleasure to him to be able to speak of your reverence and of his two adopted brothers, Messrs. Campbell and Fitzpatrick. I will give him the packet directly after his return, and will inform you of the sentiments with which he will have received it, as well as his reply.

Here in our missions, we already observe all the conditions stipulated in the treaty concluded last year by Gov. Stevens, at Hellgate. Our brothers assist the Indians, and teach them how to cultivate the ground. They distribute the fields and the seeds for sowing and planting, as well as the ploughs

and other agricultural instruments. Our blacksmith works for them: he repairs their guns, their axes, their knives; the carpenter renders them great assistance in constructing their houses, by making the doors and windows; in fine, our little mill is daily in use for grinding their grain, *gratis;* we distribute some medicines to the sick;—in a word, all we have and all we are is sacrificed to the welfare of the Indian. The savings that our religious economy enables us to make, we retain solely to relieve their miseries. Whatever we gain by manual labor and by the sweat of the brow, is theirs! Through love of Jesus Christ, we are ready to sacrifice all, even life itself. Last year we opened our school; but circumstances forced us to close it. Next spring we shall have a brother capable of teaching, and we intend opening it a second time; but in the interval we shall not earn a cent. During last October, the snow forced Fathers Joset and Ravalli and Brother Saveo to return to the Cœur-d'Alènes.

We have done, and shall continue to do, all that lies in our power for the government officers. Still our poor mission has never received a farthing from the government. Do not think, reverend father, that I complain—oh no! you are too well assured no earthly good could ever induce us to work and suffer as we do here. As wealth itself could never recompense our toils, so privations are incapable of leading us to renounce our noble enterprise. Heaven, heaven alone is our aim; and that reward will far exceed our deserts. On the other hand, we are consoled by the reflection that He who provides for the birds of the air will never abandon his tenderly loved children. Yet it is not less true, that, if we had resources (humanly speaking), our missions would be more flourishing; and that many things that we now accomplish only with great patience and sore privations, and which

again frequently depend upon contingencies, could be effected more rapidly and with less uncertainty of success.

In our mission, there are persons of such a variety of nations, that we form, so to speak, a heaven in miniature. First, our community is composed of six members, all of whom are natives of different lands. Then we have creoles: Genetzi, whose wife is Susanna, daughter of the old Ignatius Chaves; Abraham and Peter Tinsley, sons of old Jacques Boiteux; Alexander Thibault, a Canadian, and Derpens. There are some Iroquois: old Ignatius is settled here, as well as the family of Iroquois Peter. The death of this venerable old man is a great loss to the mission. Then we have creoles from the Creek nation; Pierrish, and Anson, with his brothers; then some Flat-Heads; Kalispels; two camps of Pends-d'Oreilles; then several Spokans; some Nez-Percés, Koetenays, Cœur-d'Alènes, and Kettle-Falls Indians; a few Americans, settled a few miles from here; and some Black-Feet. All, though of different nations, live together like brethren and in perfect harmony. They have, like the primitive Christians, but one heart and one mind.

Last spring, and during the summer following, we had several Black-Feet here. They behaved extremely well. Among others, the Little Dog, chief of the Pégans, with some members of his family. They entered our camp with the American flag unfurled, and marching to the tones of martial music and an innumerable quantity of little bells. The very horses pranced in accordance with the measure, and assumed a stately deportment at the harmony of the national hymn.

We held several conferences with the chief concerning religion. He complained that the whites, who had been in communication with them, had never treated this so important affair. So far the best understanding reigns between us,

and it would appear that all the old difficulties are forgotten. May Heaven keep them in these favorable dispositions. Last summer the Crows stole about twenty horses from our nation. A few days after, others visited our camp. The remembrance of this theft so excited the people that, forgetting the law of nations, which secures protection to even the greatest enemy as soon as he puts his foot within the camp, they fell upon the poor guests, and killed two of them ere they had time to escape.

May God bless the government for establishing peace among the Black-Feet! However, as hitherto the means have not proved very efficacious, I fear that the quiet will not be of very long duration. I trust that our society will one day effect a more enduring peace. A mission among them would, I am persuaded, produce this blessed result. And if to bedew this hitherto ungrateful soil requires the blood of some happy missionary, it would bring forth a hundredfold, and the Black-Feet would respect our holy religion.

I am much distressed at learning that an epidemic disease is making terrible ravages among the Black-Feet. According to the last news, about 150 Indians had perished in one camp alone, near Fort Benton. When the malady had ceased scourging men, it fell upon their horses. Many are dead already, and many are dying. We have lost five. Our hunters are forced to go to the chase on foot; for, according to their account, all the horses are sick. If the Nez-Percés lose their horses in the war with government, horses will be very dear here.

Michael, the Little Chief, has arrived. I presented him the gracious gift of Col. Campbell. He was astonished that the colonel should think of him, and was much moved at this mark of attachment. Then he cited a long list of kindred, dead since his last interview with Col. Campbell, and enter-

tained me at length with the great number of Americans that he had seen annually passing Fort Hall. He told me with what solicitude and anxiety he sought his friend among those successive multitudes, and when at length he could not discover him, he believed that he was dead.

Our Indians are bison-hunting, and quite successful. Five Spokans have been killed by the Banacs, and six of these last killed by the Spokans and Cœur-d'Alènes. The Flat-Heads have had a man killed by the same Banacs. Louis, Ambrose's son, was killed last fall by the Gros-Ventres. All last winter a good understanding prevailed among the Black-Feet. Many of them will come, I think, and reside with us.

The Nez-Percés and the Spokans endeavor to spread a bad spirit among the Indians who reside in the country below. They endeavor to communicate their hatred of the Americans; but our chiefs are firm, and will in no wise acquiesce in the desire of their enemies. Victor, the great chief, and Ambrose, are here again, in order to accomplish their spiritual duties. Unfortunately a great antipathy prevails among these tribes.

Mr. McArthur, formerly agent of the Hudson Bay Company, has now settled at Hellgate.

To conclude, Rev. Father, I entreat you to believe that, notwithstanding your reiterated exhortations to assure me, it is not without a feeling of restraint that I inclose you anew the list of things we need this year. I am aware that you are weighed down with business; but who, as well as yourself, can know and understand our position?

I entreat you to present my respects to all my kind friends who are at the university, at St. Charles, and elsewhere.

Your reverence's most respectful servant,

A. Hoeken, S. J.

Letter XXV.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels

The Potawatomies.

Turnhout, December 16, 1856.

Rev. and dear Father:

I am, this day, in the city where one of the most zealous benefactors of foreign missions, I mean the late M. De Nef, resided many years. From this, I shall set out for Holland, and I purpose meeting you again in Brussels, please God, in the month of January.

I yield most cheerfully to the wish you express to publish the letter that I addressed, in 1838, to the excellent Superior of the Orphanage of Termonde, and of which a fragmentary copy was given you at Erps, on the occasion of your pleasant trip to the pious servants of Mary and their edifying pupils. The original letter will, no doubt, be communicated by the house of Termonde. I rely on you for all other pieces you may find in your search for manuscripts.

Nation of the Potawatomies, St. Joseph, July, 1838.

Very kind Mother:

I received your letter of March 13th, with all your good news of Termonde, even *dat Charles Geyzel koster geworden is. Ongelwyfelt zat het eenen goeden koster zyn.** All your

* "Charles Geyzel is named Vicar. No doubt he will prove a good one

communications give me great pleasure and much consolation. I do not forget my native place. Continue, therefore, to send me very frequently the most minute details. All that a Termontois can learn of that point of the globe, even when he finds himself in an American desert, two thousand miles away, amid Indians and wild beasts, is always charming to him. Indeed, the reception of your letter was a holiday for me.

What shall I say to you, Mother, on all that you write me of the actual state of your house, and of the good Marolles that the Lord destines to take care of so many poor and miserable, under the direction of your worthy director? Ah! I assure you, I bless God for it, in the sincerity of my heart. If he deigns to hear me, he will keep you all, your orphan boys and girls, your old men and your children, beneath his powerful and holy grace. It is my ardent and daily prayer before the altar. I thank you all, teachers and pupils, that you do not forget me, above all, in your prayers. I hope you will continue to implore the Blessed Virgin to protect our poor missions, and obtain for us, from her Divine Son, who can refuse her naught, the grace and strength necessary to overcome the numerous obstacles which separate the savage from the path of salvation.

You no doubt expect a little recital from the depth of our wilderness. Well, I will exhibit you the light and the shade. It is just that you, who pray so much for us, should know somewhat of the exact state of our affairs. Your prayers for .s, I am sure will, if possible, increase in fervor.

First I will narrate to you the great loss that we experienced towards the end of April. Our superior sent us, from St. Louis, goods to the amount of $500, in ornaments for the church. A tabernacle, a bell, and provisions and clothes for a year. I had been for a long time without

shoes, and from Easter we were destitute of supplies. All the Potawatomie nation were suffering from scarcity, having only acorns and a few wild roots for their whole stock of food. At last, about the 20th of April, they announced to to us that the much-desired boat was approaching. Already we saw it from the highest of our hills. I procured, without delay, two carts to go in search of our baggage. I reached there in time to witness a very sad sight. The vessel had struck on a sawyer, was pierced, and rapidly sinking in the waves. The confusion that reigned in the boat was great, but happily, no lives were lost. The total damage was valued at $40,000. All the provisions forwarded by government to the savages were on board of her. Of our effects, four articles were saved: a plough, a saw, a pair of boots, and some wine. Providence was still favorable to us. With the help of the plough, we were enabled to plant a large field of corn; it was the season for furrowing. We are using the saw to build a better house and enlarge our church, already too small. With my boots, I can walk in the woods and prairies without fear of being bitten by the serpents which throng there. And the wine permits us to offer to God every day the most holy sacrifice of the mass, a privilege that had been denied us during a long time. We, therefore, returned, with courage and resignation, to the acorns and roots until the 30th of May. That day another boat arrived. By that same steamer I received news from you, as well as a letter from my family and from the good Carmelite superior.

Our congregation already amounts to about three hundred. At Easter we had fifty candidates for the first communion. I recommend, in a very special manner, these poor Indians, that they may maintain their fervor. The dangers and scandals which surround them are very great. I have

remarked, in one of my preceding letters, that one of the principal obstacles to the conversion of the savages is drinking. The last boat brought them a quantity of liquors. Already fourteen among them are cut to pieces in the most barbarous manner, and are dead. A father seized his own child by the legs and crushed it, in the presence of its mother, by dashing it against the post of his lodge. Two others most cruelly murdered an Indian woman, a neighbor of ours, and mother of four children. We live in the midst of the most disgusting scenes. The passion of the savages for strong drink is inconceivable. They give horses, blankets, all, in a word, to have a little of this brutalizing liquid. Their drunkenness only ceases when they have nothing more to drink. Some of our neophytes have not been able to resist this terrible torrent, and have allowed themselves to be drawn into it. I wrote an energetic letter to the government against these abominable traffickers. Join your prayers to our efforts to obtain from Heaven the cessation of this frightful commerce, which is the misery of the savages in every relation.

I visit the Indians in their wigwams, either as a missionary, if they are disposed to listen to me, or as a physician to see their sick. When I find a little child in great danger, and I perceive that the parents have no desire to hear the word of God, I spread out my *vials:* I recommend my medicines strongly. I first bathe the child with a little camphor; then, taking some baptismal water, I baptize it without their suspecting it—and thus I have opened the gate of heaven to a great number, notwithstanding the wiles of hell to hinder them from entering.

During the winter a chief of a neighboring nation brought me his child, attacked with a very dangerous malady; it only had a breath of life remaining. The father asked med-

icine from me. I gave him to understand that his child was past recovery, but that I had the means of rendering it, after death, the happiest of his nation. I explained to him the favors arising from the sacrament of baptism. The chief, quite delighted, offered me his son in order to secure its happiness, and the child died on the following day.

I might cite you a great number of other consoling traits with which Heaven favors us, but my sheet is too small to allow of it.

I will consecrate this last page to a description of the principal incidents of my excursion of 360 miles further into the Indian Territories, through the country of the Omahas, and in the immense tract of country occupied by the Sioux. The object of this journey was to afford the benefit of baptism to some children, to give adults some ideas of our holy religion, and to establish a durable and advantageous peace between the two nations. Our savages have lived, during the last two years, in a terrible dread of this numerous and warlike nation; lately, also, two of our people had been massacred.

I embarked on the Missouri, the 29th of April, in a steamboat. I met on board, to my great joy, two old friends: the one a French mathematician, Mr. Nicollet, a very learned and pious man; the other, Mr. Gayer, a German. These gentlemen are making a scientific excursion of 4500 miles into the Indian countries. The waters of the river were low; the sand-banks and the sawyers very numerous and difficult to pass; the winds strong and contrary. Our progress was very slow. We had many an opportunity to make excursions in the woods and prairies, searching for new minerals, which abound in these wilds, and rare and curious plants, among which we made some beautiful discoveries. I thought of you, my good mother, when I found myself in those

beautiful parterres. I imagined once, for an instant, that you were there, with your little children. I heard your exclamations: "*Potten, potten, kinderen! wel, wel!* . . . . *Dat zyn schoone bloemen! Wie zoude het konnen gelooven?* . . . *Maer ziet, maer ziet!* . . . . *Komt hier, moeder; hier heb ik eene schoone*," etc., etc.* Indeed it was truly the most beautiful view one could fancy. When the bell called us back to the steamer, I quitted those little parks of wild flowers with much difficulty. I gathered a great number of plants, which I preserved in my herbal. We passed over several spots where there were only onions, round, and about as large as the marbles children use for play, but excellent for eating. In another place we gathered a great quantity of asparagus, as thick as a man's thumb. All the passengers of the steamboat regaled themselves with it during four days. I will tell you nothing of our little encounters with the wolves and the serpents; *dat zoude het spel verbrodden*— (that would dispel the charm).

On the route, I instructed and baptized, on the vessel, a woman with her three children, and heard the confessions of a great number of Canadian voyageurs, who were going to the Rocky Mountains.

A tomb attracts attention in these regions; it is the tomb of *Black Bird*, the great chief of the Omahas. This chief became celebrated by the ascendency which he possessed over his nation; he was an object of terror and respect to his people, for they believed that he could control life and death. The origin of their belief is as follows: He had procured a large quantity of arsenic, by the aid of a merchant; the latter at the same time instructed him in the method of

* Vases—flower-pots—children—oh! what a beautiful flower! Here—here, mother, I have one still more lovely, etc., etc. Come here, &c.

using it; but the wretch soon received his recompense. Black Bird invited him to dine with him on a day appointed, and adroitly administered to him a good dose of his terrible medicine. The merchant, to the great pleasure of his host, died some hours after, in frightful torments. Proud of his attempt, Black Bird soon meditated a perfidious blow, and made great preparation for its execution. He dispatched a party of his people to the chase, so as to kill some deer and buffaloes for his banquet. The principal warriors and the minor chiefs had become jealous of the ascendency that the great chief exercised for some time over the nation. Black Bird, informed of their discontent and murmurs, invited to his feast to the very last of his warriors who had murmured. He lavished his attentions upon them, and showed the most distinguished marks of cordiality to his guests, wishing apparently to be reconciled with them, and to efface the bad impression that his hard-heartedness and haughty bearing had caused. As soon as each one had emptied his plate, and the poison had begun to act on some, he threw off the mask, and began to harangue them on the great power of his manitou or genius which guided him, and, brandishing his tomahawk in triumph, bade them, with sarcasm and bitterness, "to intone their *death songs*, if any warlike blood yet circled in their veins;" adding, with the accent of revenge, "that before the sun's rising"—it was night—"the vultures would fly above their wigwams, and that their wives and children would mourn over their lifeless corpses." It was a night of confusion, tears, fear, and tumult. No one escaped the poison!

The whole life of this man was a chain of crimes and cruelties. Tired of "pouring out blood," as the Indians say, or rather pursued by remorse and despair, he allowed himself to die with hunger. Before expiring, he gave orders to his

faithful warriors to bury him on the highest of the hills, an elevation of three hundred feet, seated on his most beautiful courser, facing the impetuous Missouri,—"so that," said he, "I can salute all the voyageurs." His tomb resembles a little hillock. It is surmounted by a pole, to which the Indians attach a flag. It can be easily distinguished eighteen miles off.

Our boat passed near the village of the Omahas, composed of about 1400 souls. It is situated at the extremity of a beautiful prairie, about three miles in extent, at the foot of a little range of hills. No one came to the shore to see us pass,—fearing, it seems, that the small-pox was on board, and might be introduced among them. Only two years ago, by an unpardonable imprudence of the captain, this disease was introduced into the Indian country by the same vessel, and produced ravages frightful and unheard of in the Indian annals. Twenty-five or thirty thousand died in a few weeks. Of twelve hundred men of the tribe of the Mandans, only seven families escaped the contagion. About eighty warriors of this little nation committed suicide in the days of calamity, some in despair at the loss of their children and friends, others through fear of becoming the slaves of their enemies, and the greater number saying that they were horrified at the idea of seeing their bodies corrupted while yet alive.

On the 11th of May I reached my destination, and quitted with regret my four new children in Christ and my two friends. It would have been very gratifying to me to have accompanied these two gentlemen in their lengthy course, if my health and circumstances would have allowed me, so as to visit the numerous nations of the mountains.

On my arrival among the Sioux, the chiefs and warriors of the tribe of Jantons invited me to a feast. All were seated in a circle in a grand lodge or tent of buffalo hides. Each one rested his chin on his knees, the legs drawn close up to

the body, a position that my corpulency would not allow me to assume. I therefore seated myself like a tailor on his table, with my legs crossed. Every one received a big piece of venison in a wooden trencher; those who cannot finish their portion are permitted to take away—it is their custom—the remains of his plate. I was among this number, and I had enough left for two days.

The repast concluded, I disclosed to them the principal object of my visit among them, viz.: a durable peace between the Sioux and the Potawatomies their neighbors. Having discussed the different points, refuted the false reports that divided the two nations, I persuaded the Sioux to make some presents to the children of such of our Potawatomies as they had killed, which is called *covering the dead*, and to come and smoke with them the calumet of peace. The feast and the council were terminated with the most perfect cordiality. The same evening I gave them an instruction on the Apostles' Creed, and I baptized a great number of their little children. This nation, dispersed over a wide extent, reckons 32,000 souls.

The object of my voyage being attained, I seized the first opportunity of returning to my mission. The savages, besides, had already struck the camp to follow the bison, which were moving away. My vessel, this time, was a tree hollowed out, which is called a canoe, ten feet in length, by one and a half in width. I could just seat myself in it. Before this, I had crossed the river in this sort of craft, but never without fear, it being evidently very dangerous; now I had three hundred and sixty miles to descend on the most perilous and most impetuous of rivers, and it was necessary, for I had no other way. Happily I was accompanied by two very skilful pilots, who, in paddling on the right and left, darted with the fleetness of an arrow through the numerous sawyers

with which the river was filled, the frail bark which the slightest shock could overturn. Judge how swift its course is: in three days, sailing from four o'clock in the morning until sunset, we had passed over one hundred and twenty leagues. Two nights only I slept in the open air, having no bed but my buffalo-robe, and no pillow but my travelling-bag. Yet, I can assure you, that my slumbers were as peaceable and profound as I ever enjoyed in my life. A good appetite, for the air on the water is fresh, prepared us for three excellent meals each day. My companions were well provided with bread, butter, coffee, and sugar; the game was also abundant, and we had but to select. I never saw so many ducks, geese, bustards, swans, and wild turkeys, in such a short trip. At our last encampment, attracted without doubt by the sight of the fire which sparkled at our feet, a noble stag approached us, trampling with his feet—a little more, and we might have had our skulls broken in by this enraged animal. It aroused the pilot, who, seizing the gun that was lying beside me, discharged it about two inches from my ear. This report awaked me suddenly, without, however, frightening me.

During my route, except the Sioux, I saw only one Indian hunter, and one single village, that of the Omahas. What a contrast with the beautiful, little, and populous Belgium! The huts of the Omahas are built of earth, and are conical; their circumference at the base, one hundred and twenty to one hundred and forty feet. To construct them, they plant in the ground long and thick poles, bend and join together all the ends, which are fastened to about twenty posts in the inside. These poles are afterwards covered with bark, over which they put earth about a foot in depth, and then cover the whole with turf. They look like small mounds. A large hole in the summit, permits light to enter and smoke

to escape. The fire-place is in the centre, and every hut holds from six to ten families.

A young French Creole conducted his wife to me, to have her instructed in our holy religion. He came down with her quite recently from beyond the Rocky Mountains, a distance of eleven or twelve hundred leagues. The recital that she gives me of the life led by her nation, the Ampajoots, is truly heartrending. The soil is one of the most ungrateful; they have no game at all. If they hazard leaving their country, their more numerous neighbors kill them without mercy. They are without clothes, without habitations, and roam like wild animals in the prairies, where they live on roots, grasshoppers, and large ants. They crush the last-named insects between two stones, and make a species of cake of them, which they cook in the sun or before a fire, to regale themselves with after. This poor Indian woman, aged about twenty-five years, *had never eaten meat.* Her astonishment was excessive when she first saw chickens, pigs, cows, and oxen, with other domestic fowls and animals, running about our dwellings. As soon as she is sufficiently instructed to receive baptism, I will name her Isabella, and you shall be her godmother. Therefore do not forget the poor Ampajoot in your prayers.

Your letter that you mentioned, dated July, did not reach me. The distance is about two thousand miles, and the dangers are great. My letter to the Carmelites is about the same as this. I am, excellent Mother,

Your devoted servant,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XXVI.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

The Potawatomies.

Father Duerinck, of the Society of Jesus, to Rev. P. J. De Smet, of the same Society.

——, 1850.

Rev. Father:

Called from Bardstown college to hasten on and complete the work begun by my predecessor, who for several years had presided over this mission, I arrived, early in November, 1849, at St. Mary's, and was received with the warmest welcome by my religious brethren.

I was accompanied by two lay-brothers. One was to act as treasurer, the other as cook. A third brother joined us in the course of the fall, and we made him herdsman. They also sent a young Irishman to teach the boys in our school English, having been for some time deprived of that branch for want of a teacher. It was intended, too, that he should form them to virtue, as far as he was capable.

We set to work. Although one of the brothers abandoned us suddenly, yet, thanks to the protection of the Almighty, we succeeded in covering in the buildings in course of erection before the cold set in.

We cannot here pass over in silence the aid afforded us, in our misery, by the Association for the Propagation of the Faith. Their charity, which embraces the whole world, gave us six hundred dollars, and this sum, increased by the five thousand dollars granted by government, as well as sev-

enteen hundred dollars spontaneously offered by our neophytes, furnished means to lay at least the foundation of the work.

In the early part of 1850 our mission contained seven members; three Fathers and four lay-brothers. The Ladies of the Sacred Heart were five.

Our first care was devoted to the instruction of youth. We felt that if we could thereby gain the parents, our school would daily increase in numbers, while those of the Baptists would be deserted. But the sky became clear and serene only after a storm.

There is in this country a certain class of men called *medicine-men*, or jugglers. Very ignorant, they are distinguished only by the pride of their character. They have received some vague notions about the Catholic religion, and utterly despise the acquisition of the heavenly goods, a love of which we endeavor to infuse into the children. They demand from us temporal aid, which our poverty does not enable us to give. This gives rise to dissatisfaction, and even threats and insults. Some wicked ones made it a ground for exciting the people against us. They drew comparisons between the Protestant schools and ours. The consequence of all this was, that a great number of boys and girls were, so to speak, wrested from our school and taken, in spite of themselves, to the Baptist school. Elated by this first success, the partisans of that sect did not hesitate to say openly that our school and mission would soon close. But we are convinced, on the one hand, that there is, in the apostolic career, no good enterprise that the devil does not seek to embarrass; and, on the other, relying on the justice of our cause, and the almighty protection of God, always hoped that this storm would soon pass, and that excited minds would resume their ordinary calm.

We had, too, in a manner, to maintain the war against our own neophytes. All who have visited these parts are well aware that these denizens of the woods beg their bread, whether pressed by want or not, and you constantly hear them repeating: "I am hungry." According to one of their traditions, they believe that all that an individual possesses in private belongs, of full right, to the whole village. The previous years, as our Fathers had no scholars to feed, they were able to give abundant alms, with a certain profusion, to the tribe confided to their care, and this was a potent means of gaining the affection and esteem of all: but circumstances had changed; we, too, had to change our tactics, and we did not feel that we could give so lavishly out of doors what we needed so much within. We had, consequently, to restrict ourselves to aiding, as far as our means permitted, those really in distress. As for the others, we told them that they ought, by their own labor, to obtain wherewith to live; that such was the law of the Sovereign Master, and that if they obeyed it faithfully, they would soon have every thing in abundance; that their health would also be better. We especially sought to inculcate that, by destroying idleness, the source of all evil, they would soon experience in their soul the joy and happiness which a life sanctified by the practice of Christian virtues affords. Our counsels made some impression on a small number of the most sensible; but for the rest, especially at first, the food was too spiritual for them to relish. Hence many, if they did not accuse us of avarice, at least, reproached us with being too hardhearted. Yet, as there was really no ill-will among them, and, by God's grace, they saw all the pain and trouble we took for the salvation of their souls, they did not long listen to their most deadly enemy, but returned to better feelings.

Towards the latter part of February, Father Hoeken, after giving the eight days' retreat in our mission, started for St. Louis, whence he proceeded to Michigan, to assist the Potawatomies of that State. It would be impossible to describe the joy experienced by these poor men of the woods at the sight of a minister of the Gospel, whose great age rendered him so venerable, and who proclaimed the eternal truth in their own language. Father Hoeken, unable to prolong his stay, left them, after a few days, to the great regret of all. He immediately returned to those whom he could so justly call his children in Christ, bringing a lay-brother to teach the boys. Another brother had joined us, not long before, who acted as shoemaker, and, at the same time, endeavored to restore somewhat our little church choir, which had greatly declined.

As the Potawatomies occupy a large tract, in order to afford more easily the consolations of religion to all the Catholics, we have erected two churches beyond the Kansas, one, dedicated to Our Lady of Dolors, is about seventeen miles from our residence; the other, dedicated to St. Joseph, is in a little village six miles hence. Before erecting these two churches, we agreed that every Sunday one of our Fathers should go to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice alternately, in one of the two.

St. Joseph's village has a Baptist establishment, where children are instructed. Boys are mixed up with girls, and it is needless to say that this cannot be without detriment to morality. The superintendent of the school is a physician also; so that, being at the same time teacher, physician, and preacher of the Word of God, as he says, he enjoys a triple income not to be despised. He has been among the Potawatomies since he was a boy, but all his efforts to win them to his doctrines have been thus far fruitless. He had formerly one adherent, but one day he happened to sell his

friends a great deal of strong liquor, and they becoming intoxicated, rushed on the Baptist house and burst in the doors with great uproar. In consequence, the only neophyte they had in the country was, *ipso facto*, visited with *major excommunication* as they call it. The Catholics have such an aversion for the Protestant ministers, that they will not even receive them as physicians. We will cite one fact, although we cannot approve it. It will show how greatly the Catholics fear being perverted by the Protestants.

A woman was dangerously ill. As soon as the Protestant minister heard it he went to see her as a physician, though without ceasing to be a minister. When he arrived at the sick woman's house he was met by some very stout men, who called out: "What brings you here?" "I come," replied the minister, "to bring medicines to the sick person, and I am sure that she will be helped." "We have medicines as good as yours," they replied, roughly. "If you will not let me give her remedies, at least permit me to offer her some consolation." "Gently; she needs rest, not consolation." "But let me see her." "No, she will not see any one." At these words the minister retired, accusing us as the authors of his ill reception, and vowing summary vengeance.

In fact, a few days after, one of our community, called by a sick man, went to see him. At the door of the lodge he found a furious young man, who addressed him in about these terms: "The sick man has been confided to my care; the physician does not want him troubled, so that you shall not see him." The Father replied in a calm but firm tone, that he was a priest and not a doctor; that he had no intention of contravening the doctor's orders; that he gave him all due respect; that he had still less intention of troubling the sick person; that, on the contrary, he came to afford him the consolations of our holy religion; that as he had

been called in by the sick man himself, he would not go without seeing him. On this the young man desisted; but at the very moment the minister, who had kept out of sight in the house, appeared and apologized for the young man's conduct.

A Methodist minister also came along. He tried to sow cockle among the Potawatomies. As he had resided nearly twenty years among the Ottos, he speaks the Potawatomie with uncommon ease. He, too, settled in St. Joseph's, hoping to gain the people more easily, as they were remote from us. He especially endeavored to get the chief (Joseph Mechkomi) into his toils. Fortunately, however, he was not a man to be caught by words. One day the minister went to see him, and found him reading the Bible. "What are you reading?" said he, as he entered. "The Word of God," replied Mechkomi. "And what does the Lord say to you?" "He says, 'beware of false prophets, for they will come in the form of lambs, but within they will be ravening wolves.'" Then, he added, in a still firmer tone, "And do you stop laying snares for us, or go elsewhere, for here you lose your time and trouble." The minister, astonished, took the advice, and withdrew to another part.

The following is a general view of the spiritual fruit that, with God's grace, we have been enabled to gather this year. I will sum up all briefly. Fifty couples have been united in the holy bonds of marriage; 36 dead have been buried with all the ceremonies of the Church; we have heard about 5000 confessions; 117 persons, including 30 adults, have received holy baptism. I will relate the conversion of but three, because they are the most remarkable, and suffice to show us the infinite goodness and mercy of God to sinners.

The first of these converts, Chawnekwok by name, had experienced for years the inward struggle of grace, which

urged him to bridle his passions and devote himself to God's service; but he had always resisted this appeal till he was was far advanced in years. At last, however, alarmed by the thought of eternal pains, and pursued night and day by remorse of conscience, he durst no longer defer, and resolved to give himself forever unreservedly to his Creator and Sovereign Lord. Then, painting his face various colors, he went to a priest and imparted his courageous resolve. He told him at the same time, that he had selected for his abode a spot near the church; that he would soon return to his family to acquaint his wife with his design; that then, having washed his face, he would come back to be instructed in the faith. For a month our good old man used every imaginable means to gain his wife to Christ, or at least to bring her with him to the village. As nothing could induce her, but instead of yielding she only increased in obstinacy, he addressed her in about these terms: "Go, wretched woman! go on provoking the wrath of the Almighty; for my part, I shall not expose myself to the eternal flames of hell on your account!" After these words he left her, and came to reside with the Christians. Desirous of ridding himself of all that had formerly served for the worship of the devil, he placed in the missionary's hands a bag full of medicines and herbs, begging him to choose such as could really help the sick, and to destroy all those to which a magical or a superstitious power was attributed. Some were very strange. To some were ascribed power to kill enemies, even at a great distance; to others, power to attract whole herds of stags; to others, power of getting the coat, pistol, or other articles of a person met on the way. There were some, too, to win the friendship of whoever you wished, and to excite in others improper thoughts. All these objects, and many others which the devil employs to deceive the people, were commit-

ted to the flames, in the presence of the good old man, who at the sight felt such profound joy that he could not refrain from tears. After a due probation, he received holy baptism. From that moment he changed completely his mode of life; in all the difficulties and miseries of life, he maintained so calm and cheerful a spirit, that the missionary could not help one day asking him the reason: "Father, once our name is inscribed in heaven in the Book of Life, nothing should afflict us on this earth."

Chawnekwok, having seen and felt himself how sweet it is to serve the Lord, ardently desired to communicate his happiness to the members of his family. He took especial care of a niece aged about eight. By a pious stratagem, he induced her parents to let the little girl come and live with him. In three days he taught her all the prayers that catechumens are accustomed to learn, and then took her to the priest to be regenerated in the waters of baptism.

He then tried to gain his own son, who, at last, gave him as much consolation as he had given him pain at first. This young man had formerly been among the catechumens; but he was such a slave to vice, and his relapses were so frequent, that the missionary, finding him deaf to his father's counsels and exhortations, had lost all hope of ever gaining him, and resolved to abandon him to the tyranny of his shameful passions. The pious old man, on learning the missionary's resolution, threw himself at his feet and implored him with tears to take pity on his wretched son, and not to give him up; he told him that he would go and see him himself, that he would once more beseech him not to resist the grace of God, and that he had no doubt that if the missionary would join his prayers to his, the lost sheep would return to the fold. The missionary could not resist this touching appeal, and consented to accompany him, more

from esteem for the father, than from hope for the son. The old man set out at once, although it was midwinter, and he had taken nothing that day. The missionary followed him closely, and had the consolation of restoring to the strait path of virtue this new prodigal child, gained by the prayers and tears of his virtuous father.

God, who shows himself so good and so merciful to the greatest sinners, will certainly not forsake those whom he beholds leading, amid the shades of heathenism, a more orderly life. The Supreme Truth has promised that heaven will not refuse ulterior graces, to those who employ well what they have.

The realization of this has appeared in the conversion of a woman named Misseniko. She was dangerously sick. Although she could not reproach herself with any grievous fault, she was not tranquil; for she knew that without faith, it is impossible to please God. Hence, without delay—for she always did what she deemed the surest and most perfect—she called in the priest. The minister of the Lord taught her what God required of her. She at once asked and received baptism. With every desire gratified, she constantly exclaimed amid the pangs of sickness: "I shall die willingly; for I have received holy baptism. I shall see God and all his saints for eternity." The conversion of this woman is due, we believe, in a great measure to the prayers of her daughter, who had gone, a few days before, to receive her reward in heaven. Young Misseniko was always distinguished for her tender devotion to the Mother of God. She preserved, with great respect, the scapular which she had received at school. She held this object of devotion in such esteem that, during her illness, while delirious she raised her hand to her scapular whenever it was touched, for fear any one should deprive her of her precious treasure.

The pious girl died, and her mother bewailed her bitterly. But one night the eldest sister of the deceased saw her, not in a dream, as she herself relates, but when perfectly awake, —saw her all radiant with light, and heard her utter these words: "Why do you weep so bitterly for me? I am enjoying eternal happiness. I died in the morning, as you recollect, and I remained in the flames of expiation till about noon, then the Blessed Virgin delivered me and took me up to heaven." Although stories of this kind should not be lightly credited, we must nevertheless admit, that the Lord is admirable in his saints, and in his manner of guiding his elect.

And, doubtless, the sun of divine justice enlightens all men. God wills not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. He not only, so to speak, goes forth to meet those who come towards him, but he even pursues those who fly from him; he urges, he presses them constantly to do penance, that thereby we may better understand that what good there is in us, is not due to our own merits, but to his sole goodness, to the infinite mercy of God.

Here is a remarkable instance. There was in the southern part of our mission, a man named Kamchas, a slave of liquor, and of all the vices which usually attend that bad habit. One night, he was suddenly awakened from a deep sleep, and seemed to hear a voice cry: "One of your relatives has just died suddenly over the river. Get ready, for you will soon follow him." At first, Kamchas took this cry for a dream, endeavored to banish the disagreeable idea, and get to sleep again; but the terrible voice troubled him. To calm his mind, he crossed the river as soon as it was day and came to our village. He had hardly got there, when, to his amazement, he heard of the death of a young kins-

man. You may easily conceive his feelings, his pain, and his anguish. One day, while reflecting on the event, and more than usually troubled, he met the missionary, who, seeing him persist in his idolatry, explained to him the duty of all men to know and serve one only God, creator of heaven and earth. He urged him to determine the course of his future life, and to make an humble confession of his faults. Kamchas hearkened to the advice. Four weeks after, he came to the Father, humbly to solicit baptism; but, according to custom, obtained this favor only after a long preparation. The neophyte really put off the old man to put on the new. Thenceforward patience, mildness, temperance, diligence, a spirit of prayer, and a remarkable devotion to the blessed sacrament, were the virtues most resplendent in him. When he met any thing difficult, or less agreeable to corrupt nature, he was accustomed to excite his courage by words like these: "To become a slave of Satan, you overcame the greatest difficulties; and you cannot surmount a little one to be a child of God!" Although, as warned from above, he spent but a short time longer on earth, he thus laid up the merits of a long life.

Such are, Reverend Father, the chief benefits received from heaven during the year 1850; and for which, on the 31st of December, we, with unanimous voices, thanked God by the joyous *Te Deum*.

Accept, Rev. Father, the assurance of my profound respect.

Your devoted brother in Christ,

J. B. Duerinck, S. J.

Letter XXVII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Excursion among the Potawatomies.

University of St. Louis, Feb. 26, 1858.

Rev. and dear Father:

I send you a copy of a letter that I addressed to Mrs. P., a Belgian lady, residing at Brooklyn, near New York. She is a great benefactress of the missions. My letter contains some details concerning my recent visit to the Potawatomies, on the actual and very critical state of those Indians, and of all the nations and Indian tribes in the two new Territories of Kansas and Nebraska.

What I wrote to you in December, 1851, and you published in the *Précis Historiques*, of 1853, pages 398, etc., has been literally verified. A great number of towns and villages have sprung up in it as if by enchantment. The principal towns of Kansas are: Wyandot, Delaware, Douglas, Marysville, Iola, Atchinson, Fort Scott, Pawnee, Lecompton, Neosho, Richmond, Tecumseh, Lavinia, Lawrence, Port William, Doniphan, Paolo, Alexandria, Indianola, Easton, Leavenworth, and many others. They differ in population and improvements. Lawrence and Leavenworth are the most considerable. This latter, which is now an episcopal city, contains already more than 8000 inhabitants. They project building a Territorial university in the town of Douglas. A medical college is established at Lecompton. The Univer-

sity of Kansas is incorporated and established at Leavenworth. Funds are set apart for the erection of schools, on a vast scale. They accrue from the sale of lands granted by the United States, which are extraordinarily extensive. All fines, pecuniary penalties, escheats, ordained by law, are also to be poured into the treasury of the schools and colleges.

Two months from this, the Territory of Kansas will be admitted as an independent State, and will form a portion of the great confederation of the United States. There exists little doubt, at present, but that Kansas will adopt the laws of the free States—that is to say, there will be no slavery.

Good Father Duerinck has left a manuscript concerning all that passed in the Mission of St. Mary's. If it would give you pleasure, I will send it to you, according as time will admit.

University of St. Louis, February 24, 1856.

Mrs. S. P., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Madam:—I have just terminated a journey of over 800 miles, going and returning in the midst of ice and snow by the most miserable roads and in *wagons*, which increased the inconveniences of the way. On my return to St. Louis, your kind letter and charitable donations were remitted to me. Accept my most humble thanks, with my heartfelt gratitude. I will assign the vestment to the mission of the Flat-Heads, which is very poor in church furniture. I hope to find, in the beginning of spring, a good opportunity of dispatching it by the boats of the Fur Company. The marine plants will be most acceptable to the Fathers in our colleges of Namur and Antwerp, in Belgium, and will be admired, I am sure, in the collections of those two establishments. Once more, madam, receive, one and all, my sin-

cere thanks for the new benefits that you have just added to the long list of numerous others, commenced many years since; and for which we have naught but poor prayers to render. We shall not cease to address them to the Lord, for the happiness of your family; and I will appeal to our pious Indians, that they continue to pray for their kind Mothers—their good benefactresses.

The occasion of the voyage, which I have mentioned in the beginning of my letter, was a glimmer of hope of being able to discover the body of our dear brother in Jesus Christ, the Rev. Father Duerinck. Some days after the unfortunate accident, the captain of a steamboat had seen a dead body on a sand-bank, near the place of the accident, and had buried it. At this news I started to visit that solitary grave, on the bank of the Missouri, near the town of Liberty. He, whom this grave contained, was not the brother, the cherished friend and relative I sought. His dress denoted a hand on some boat. I was very much grieved. Our petitions so far have not been heard. We hope, however, that the great St. Anthony of Padua, implored by so many pious souls, will be propitious; and I beg you to be so kind as to join your prayers with these fervent invocations. It would be a source of consolation could we find the lost remains of Father Duerinck, and inter them in consecrated ground, beside his brethren who have preceded him.

From the town of Liberty I repaired to St. Mary's, in order to regulate some affairs there. I began the mission of the Potawatomies in 1838. My heart seemed to dilate among these good children of the plains, where, in former days, I had found so many consolations in the exercises of the holy ministry. I had the happiness of seeing a great number of Indians approach Holy Communion, with the deepest recollection. From the altar I addressed them some

words of consolation and encouragement in the service of the Divine Pastor. They have great need, especially at present, for the whites have surrounded them on all sides; and they will soon hem them in more closely on their own little reserves, or portions of earth that the government has granted them.

I am aware, madam, that you take a deep interest in the welfare of the poor Indians. Allow me, therefore, to converse with you some moments on their position in general, and in particular of what concerns the Indians of St. Mary's among the Potawatomies.

At the period of my arrival among the Potawatomies (in 1838), the nation numbered beyond 4000 souls. It is now reduced to 3000, of whom 2000 are Catholics. All the surrounding tribes have diminished in the same ratio.

To what are we to attribute this rapid decrease of the Indian race? This is one of those mysteries of Providence that all the sagacity of philosophy has in vain endeavored to penetrate. The immoderate use of intoxicating liquors, change of climate and of diet, vices, pestilential maladies (all these evils which contact with the whites produces among savages), improvidence and want of industry, all, united or singly, give, it appears to me, but an imperfect solution of this great problem. Whence is it that the red-man bends with such difficulty to the manners and customs of the European race? Whence is it again, that the European race refuses so obstinately to sympathize with the red race; and notwithstanding its philanthropy, or love of mankind, seems ather disposed to annihilate than to civilize these poor children, offspring of the same Father? Whence springs that insurmountable barrier between the two races? Whence is it that the stronger pursues the weaker with such an animosity, and never relents until the latter is overthrown?

There is involved in this, perhaps, a secret that none but the Judge Supreme can explain.

Often when I reflect on the position of so many barbarous nations, who formerly were the owners of immense countries, and which are at the present day in imminent danger of being totally dispossessed by another people, I call to mind the primitive inhabitants of Palestine, who, masters also of one of the most beautiful countries in the world, saw themselves deprived of it by a severe but most just judgment of the Creator, whose menaces they had despised and whose glory they had profaned. Like the Canaanites, the savage tribes, taken in general, have been punished gradually. Perhaps they, like them, have been too long deaf to the divine voice, inviting them to quit their gross errors and embrace the doctrines of truth. Who has entered into the councils of Eternal Wisdom? Who can accuse his judgments of injustice? Cannot God, to whom the whole creation belongs, dispose of his property according to his own good pleasure? But in displaying his justice, he forgets not his mercy. Here below he strikes only to heal. His divine heart is ever open to those even whose iniquities he punishes.

The melancholy changes to which the condition of the Indian has been subjected within a few years, has led me to these mournful reflections. Under the administration of President Pierce, the whole vast Indian country within the Rocky Mountains, comprehended in the Vicariate of Bishop Miége (except a little portion situated towards the south), has been organized into two territories, known under the names of Kansas and Nebraska; that is to say, that the Congress has decreed that this country is incorporated into the Union and open to the whites who are willing to settle there, in order to form, after a lapse of time, two States, similar, in all respects, to the other States of the great republic. Although,

for the moment, the new colonists have orders to respect the territories or the lands reserved to the savages, we may nevertheless say that this decree has virtually destroyed all the Indian nationalities. Scarcely was the law known than the emigrants, like the waters of a great river which has overflowed its banks, impetuously passed the barrier and inundated the country. Now see the poor Indians surrounded by white men, and their reserves forming little more than islets amid the ocean. The savages, who before had vast countries for their hunting-grounds, are at present restricted within narrow limits, having naught for subsistence but the product of their farms, which few of them know how to cultivate properly. Again, this state is only precarious. Unless they hasten to divide their lands and become citizens, they are in danger of losing all, and of being naught but vagabonds. How replete with difficulties is such a change! What a stormy and tempestuous future for these unfortunate tribes! The evil is great, but it is one that must be encountered, since there is no remedy. The Indians, even the most advanced in civilization, seem to us ill prepared to meet all the exigencies of their situation.

In order to form a just idea of their critical position, and of the melancholy consequences which will be the result, unless restrained by a special protection of Divine Providence, imagine two societies—one representing the manners and customs of barbarians, the other all the splendor of modern civilization—coming in contact. How many years will elapse before there will be a perfect fusion between the two societies, before unison will exist, before they can dwell together in complete harmony? Much time will be required ere the barbarous state will attain the height of the civilized! Neither the first, nor the second, nor the third generation,

notwithstanding untiring efforts, would obtain that happy result, such as the thing is understood in our days. Hence, previous to a perfect fusion between the societies, the civilized society will have the advantage over the barbarous; it will have it entirely at its mercy, to make it subservient to its will and pleasure. In a word, the barbarian can no better sustain itself in presence of civilization, than the simplicity of childhood can contest against the malicious prudence of mature age. This, in my opinion, is what will be realized in the Great Desert, when the copper-colored race will come in contact with the white. The judgment of the savage is not sufficiently ripe to be able to compete with the wisdom of man born in the bosom of civilization. It is this conviction which fills us with anxiety for the future of our dear neophytes in the different missions. We confide solely in Divine Goodness, which, we hope, will not fail to come to the help of his children.

It was not difficult to descry from afar that grand event which must engulf, in one common wreck, all the Indian tribes. The storm which has just burst forth over their heads was long preparing; it could not escape the observing eye. We saw the American republic soaring, with the rapidity of the eagle's flight, towards the plenitude of her power. Every year she adds new countries to her limits. She ambitioned nothing less than extending her domination from the Atlantic to the Pacific, so as to embrace the commerce of the whole world, and dispute with other mighty nations the glory of pre-eminence. Her object is attained. All bend to her sceptre; all Indian nationality is at her feet. Far be it from us, however, to accuse the noble republic of injustice and inhumanity in her late treaties. It seems to us, on the contrary, that no nation has ever furnished them more means of civilization. If any one must be blamed on this point, it is

rather private persons, new colonists, who act and place themselves in direct opposition with the good intentions of the government in behalf of the savages.

But though the future appears sombre and melancholy, the past, at least, leaves not the missionaries comfortless. In the space of the last ten years, our Fathers at Saint Mary's have baptized beyond four hundred adults, and a great number of children. The Gospel seed has not fallen on sterile soil. The greater part of these neophytes have always given proofs of a strong faith and of a tender piety. The heart of the missionary is soothed with an unspeakable joy, on witnessing their assiduity in the church, their ardor in approaching the sacraments, their resignation in sickness, their natural charity, exercised especially in regard to the poor, the orphans, and the sick; and, above all, their zeal for the conversion of unbelievers. They are styled savages, or Indians; but we may boldly assert that, in all our great cities, and everywhere, thousands of whites are more deserving of this title.

A great number of Potawatomies have made considerable progress in agriculture, and live in a certain degree of affluence. The whites who pass by, and visit the little territory of the Potawatomies, especially in the environs of St. Mary's mission, are agreeably surprised. They find it difficult to believe that they are among Indians.

It must be acknowledged that the Potawatomies have been specially favored by Heaven. During the last quarter of a century, they have had the happiness of having Black-gowns among them; and, during sixteen or seventeen years, they have Ladies of the Sacred Heart, for the education of their girls. The mission, on its present footing, with its two schools, for girls and boys, is a double advantage for those good people. The children acquire there, with religious

instruction, the love of industry; the adults find employment in it, and hence a means of subsistence. They see, by the manual labor of our brothers, what man can acquire by diligence.

We may add, that God has treated the Potawatomies with great predilection. He has willed that several nations should contribute to their salvation. Such are, among others, Belgium, Holland, France, Ireland and Italy, Germany, Canada, and the United States. Each of these countries has offered them material aid and missionaries. Mgr. Miège has resided among them four years; hence their humble temple, constructed of logs, has been exalted to the rank of cathedral.

In the critical conjuncture in which they stand at present—on the eve of forming a last treaty with the Government of the United States, a treaty of life or death for this poor tribe—they have, in the person of Colonel Murphy, the agent of the government, an advocate, a protector, and the best of fathers. This, madam, leads me to hope that God has very particular designs of mercy over them, and that he will never forsake them. In the moment of danger, you, I am confident, will not forget them in your charitable prayers.

Be so kind as to recall me to the kind remembrances of Mr. and Mrs. B., and of Miss R., and believe me, with the most profound respect and esteem, madam,

Your most humble and most obedient servant,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

I have the honor to be, reverend and dear Father,

Revæ. Væ. in Xto.,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XXVIII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

The Osages.

Brussels, December, 185–.

Rev. Father:

I send you three letters of the Rev. F. Bax, deceased. The two first, under date of the 1st and 10th of June, 1850, have been published, in part, in the "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith," in the month of May, 1852; the third has not been published, that I am aware of; it is the last letter written by the Rev. F. Bax. You are well acquainted with the merit of this man of God, so prematurely removed from his labors. I have already given a biographical sketch in a letter to the "Précis Historiques."

First Letter of Father Bax to Father De Smet.

Mission of St. Francis Hieronymo, among the Osages, June 1, 1850.

Rev. and very dear Father:

Already three years have elapsed since we commenced the toils of our mission. I will say nothing to you of the embarrassments inseparable from such an enterprise; you are too well acquainted with this ground, and are aware, also, that to prepare it for cultivation, exacts the courage that Christian charity alone can inspire. I will not, therefore,

stop to relate the obstacles, the fatigues of every sort, that we encountered in our route. At present, the burden is alleviated; particularly since the arrival of a teacher and of a brother, the affairs of the mission are extending, and wear a much more favorable aspect.

I profit by my earliest leisure moments, to satisfy the desire that you have several times testified to me, of having some details concerning our dear mission of the Osages. I hope, in this way, to offer you a slight testimony of our gratitude for the interest you take in our labors and in our success. These marks of attention, on your part, Reverend Father, give us the assurance that, if momentarily you remain remote from your dear Indians, your heart nevertheless sighs continually towards our poor and isolated children of the wild solitude.

You are aware, that this mission was, during several years, in the hands of the Presbyterians. They were obliged to abandon it in 1845. Those gentlemen were forced to come to this resolution by the Indians themselves, who were fully determined never to adopt the doctrine of Calvin. In the course of the same year, Major Harvey, superintendent of the Indian tribes, having assembled in Council the different tribes of the Osage nation, exposed to them, in the liveliest colors, the advantages of a good education; he added, that if such should prove their will, their Great Father (the President) would send them missionaries to instruct their children. At this proposition, the Great Chief replied, in the name of the Council:

"Our Great Father is very kind; he loves his red-skinned children. Hear what we have to say on this subject. We do not wish any more such missionaries as we have had during several years; for they never did us any good. Send them to the whites; perhaps they may succeed better with

them. If our Great Father desires that we have missionaries, you will tell him to send us Black-gowns, who will teach us to pray to the Great Spirit in the French manner, Although several years have elapsed since they have visited us,* we always remember this visit with gratitude; and we shall be ever ready to receive them among us, and to listen to their preaching."

The superintendent, a just and liberal man, wished only the welfare of the Indians. Although a Protestant, he communicated this reply to the Government, and supported and confirmed it with his own remarks and observations. In pursuance with his advice, the President had recourse to the Superiors of our Society, requesting them to assume the charge of this mission.

At first, the Father Provincial offered some objections, knowing that no one had yet been able to succeed in ameliorating the condition of this people, under the double relation of spiritual and temporal. In the interval, the Indians were in the most painful uncertainty, not knowing whether the "Great Father" would grant or refuse them their petition. But they were soon satisfied; our Society accepted the mission.

In the autumn of 1846, the Reverend F. Schoenmakers quitted St. Louis to go to the Osages, with the intention of returning, after having examined the state of affairs, the houses, etc. He came back to St. Louis in midwinter, and his second departure was retarded until the following spring.

After Father Schoenmakers had left them, the poor Indians counted the days and the hours until spring, at which

* The Very Reverend M. de la Croix, now Canon at Ghent, had visited the Osages in 1820. Father Van Quickenborne visited them several years later, as well as the Rev. Mr. Lutz.

time he promised to return to them; but they waited in vain! The year glided past; they lost all hope of seeing him again. Nevertheless, they were resolved to accept none but Catholic missionaries.

When all our preparations were completed, Father Schoenmakers, myself, and three coadjutor brothers, quitted St. Louis on the 7th of April, 1849, and we arrived on the bank of the Neosho, a tributary of the Arkansas, situated about 130 miles from Westport, frontier town of the State of Missouri.

To you, my dear Father, who have many times traversed the great wilderness of the West, in its whole extent, from the States to the Pacific, who have travelled over the Rocky Mountains and their valleys—our pains, troubles, and fatigues must appear truly insignificant. But this trial was very severe to us, who were entering, for the first time, into the immense prairies of the Indians, which we had only measured according to the deceptive images of our imagination. Truly, the reality appeared to us very different. We endured hunger, thirst, and cold. For a fortnight we were obliged to pass our nights in the open air, in the dampest season of the year, each having naught for a bed but a buffalo-hide and a single blanket.

About 100 miles from Westport we had a panic. Arrived at a place named "Walnut Grove," we perceived, in the distance, a large troop of mounted Indians, who turned directly towards us. Unaccustomed to such sights, we were seized with great anxiety, which soon changed to genuine fright; for we saw those savages, on approaching us, alight from their horses with extraordinary agility. At once they took possession of our carts and wagons, which we fancied destined to pillage. They examined our chests and our baggage as minutely and coolly as old custom-house officers.

Happily we recovered from our fright. We presented them some rolls of tobacco. They shook hands with us in token of friendship. Soon after we lost sight of them, congratulating ourselves at having escaped at so trifling an expense. An idea, however, occupied us: they might repent of their benevolence towards us, and attack us and steal our horses during the night. We consequently left the ordinary route, and went and camped far in the plain. These Indians, as we learned later, belonged to the nation of Sauks, and had been paying a visit to their allies, the Osages.

On the 28th of April we reached our destination, to the great surprise and delight of the Indians; for, as I have already observed to you, they had resigned the hope of seeing us. It would be impossible to paint to you the enthusiasm with which we were received. They considered us as men whom the Great Spirit had sent to teach them the good news of salvation; to trace out to them the path to heaven, and to procure them, also, earthly peace and plenty.

At the first sight of these savages, and finding myself *surrounded* by these children of the desert, I could not suppress the pain I felt. I saw their sad condition. The adults had only a slight covering over the middle of the body; the little children, even as old as six or seven years, were wholly destitute of clothing. Half serious, half jesting, I thought that a truly *savage* portion of the Lord's vineyard had been given me to cultivate; but I did not lose courage. The object of my desires, and the subject of my prayers, during many long years, had been to become a missionary to the Indians. That grace was obtained; I felt contented and happy.

On our arrival, we found the houses unfinished, very inconvenient, and much too small for a great number of children; they were also very badly situated, not being, as

they should have been, in the centre of all the villages which compose the mission. From this resulted an increase in the number and difficulties of our occupations.

The population of the tribes (comprised under the name of Great Osages and Little Osages), is nearly 5000 souls, of whom 3500 reside on the banks of the Neosho; and the others on the Verdigris, a little river smaller than the former, although the valleys and the prairies that it waters are more favorable to culture.

The Osages who remain on the banks of the Neosho are divided into several villages. The Little Osages form a population of 1500 souls, and are twenty-two miles from the mission. The village of Nanze-Waspe contains six hundred inhabitants, at a distance of twelve miles; the village Bif-chief is composed of three hundred souls, four miles; the Weichaka-Ougrin, of five hundred, three miles; Little-Town numbers three hundred inhabitants, and is thirty miles distant; Bif-hill, or Passoi-Ougrin, situated on the Verdigris, forty miles off, has a population of six hundred souls; les Chêniers, or Sanze-Ougrin, amount to nearly seven hundred, fifty-five miles; the Black-Dog, or Skankta-Sape, village, sixty miles off, contains four hundred inhabitants. There are, besides, other small villages, dispersed at a great distance from us. The two rivers on which they dwell empty into the Arkansas. The lowlands are in general swampy, but the plain of the Neosho is sandy.

Formerly the Osages were represented as cruel and perverse, addicted to the most degrading vices; calumny depicted them as thieves, assassins, and drunkards.

To this last reproach, I am grieved to say they have given occasion; they are passionately fond of intoxicating liquors. The effects of this vice had become so terrible that, on our arrival, entire tribes were nearly destroyed. In the spring

of 1847, in one village alone, thirty young men, in the prime of life, were victims to strong drink. I have met men, women, and children, in a complete state of intoxication, dragging themselves to their wigwams like so many brutes. This spectacle, my dear Father, drew forth many tears and sighs from those who had been selected and sent to labor for the happiness and salvation of these unfortunate beings. It was extremely painful to look at those sons of the wilderness, delivered to the enemy of God and man. Thanks to our Lord, the evil was extirpated at its root; the advice of a kind and very worthy agent of government, as well as our own efforts, have succeeded so well, that drunkenness has been almost completely banished. Daily prayers are offered that this crime, and all the miseries which arise in its train, may not appear among us. At present, the Indians themselves comprehend the necessity of temperance. Several among them come frequently to tell me, with great simplicity, that they do not fall into this vice any more. These savages exhibit in their stoical resolutions, a degree of courage that should excite a blush on the cheek of many a white man.

Those who call them thieves and assassins have calumniated them. Some bands of thieves, going from the north to the south, cross the settlements of the Osages, as well as those of the whites who inhabit the frontiers. It is their trade to steal every thing and carry all away, and in such a manner that the Osages have been accused of the thefts. We may say as much of the pillages committed on the route to Santa Fé.

According to my experience, there are few nations, in this region, as affable and as affectionate as the Osages. Indeed, it may be said, that it is natural to them to wish to live in peace and perfect friendship with all whom they know.

Peace and harmony reign among them; no harsh words ever escape their tongues, unless when they have drunk to excess. Now they are at peace with all the tribes, except with the Pawnee-Mahas, whose manner of acting towards them would inspire aversion in civilized people as well as in barbarians. Scarcely are the Osages gone forth to hunt, than the Pawnees, who wait this moment, fall on their undefended villages, pillage the wigwams, and steal the horses. The Osages have frequently made peace with this nation; but the treaties have hardly been ratified, ere the perfidious enemy renewed its attacks.

I have long but vainly endeavored to put an end to the cruel mania of taking off the scalps of the dead and wounded. In this project, as in many others, I have been checked by the bad counsels and bad examples of the whites. I should be pleased to be able to tell the savages, with whom I am charged, to imitate the whites, and it would be most agreeable to me to propose them as models of imitation; but my words would be very ineffectual. Here, as formerly in Paraguay, the Indian derives no advantage from the vicinity of the whites; on the contrary, he becomes more artful, more deeply plunged in vice, and finding no blasphemous words in his own tongue, curses his God in a foreign language.

To demonstrate to you the evil effects of the proximity of the whites, I will cite you a little anecdote. The fact occurred about a year ago. I was giving an instruction in a village named Woichaka-Ougrin, or Cockle-Bird. The subject was intemperance. I spoke of the evil consequences of this passion, of its effects on the health, of the rapidity with which it conducts men to the tomb, or separates them from their wives and their children, whom the Great Spirit had intrusted to them. I added that the pleasure attending drinking was extremely short, while the punishment would

be eternal. As I was concluding, Shape-shɔn-kaouk, or The Little Beaver, one of the principal men of the tribe, arose and said to me: "Father, what thou sayest is true. We believe thy words. We have seen many buried because they loved and drank fire-water. One thing astonishes us. *We* are ignorant; *we* are not acquainted with books; *we* never heard the words of the Great Spirit: but the whites, who know books, who have understanding, and who have heard the commandments of the Great Spirit,—why do *they* drink this fire-water? why do they sell it to us? or why do they bring it to us, while they know that God sees them?"

I will now enter into some more particular details concerning our missions and our labors. Immediately after our arrival in the spring of 1847, our first care was to prepare a school. It was opened on the 10th of May. The scholars were not very numerous at the commencement; some half-bloods and three Indians were the only ones that presented themselves. The parents, full of prejudices against a "school," gave for excuse, that the children who had been confided to the former missionaries (the Presbyterians), had learned nothing, had been whipped every day, made to work continually, and at last ran away. These reports spread far and wide. The most efficacious correction that a father could employ against a child, was to threaten it with being sent to school. I had proofs of this a short time after our arrival. In one of my visits to a village of Little Osages, called Huzegta, having an interpreter with me, I entered into the lodge of the first chief. On presenting myself, I offered my hand in token of friendship. "Who are you?" said he to me. "A tapouska, or missionary," was the reply. During some moments, he hung his head without uttering a word. Then raising his eyes, he said, in a bad humor: "The missionaries never did any good to our nation." The

interpreter answered that I did not belong to the class of missionaries that he had seen; that I was a French tapouska, a Black-gown, who had come at their request and at that of their "Great Father." Then serenity reappeared on the visage of the chief, and he cried out, "This is good news." He immediately offered me his hand, called his wife, and ordered buffalo-soup, wishing to feast my arrival. He proposed several questions relative to the manner in which I would educate the children, if they were sent to me; he declared to me that he did not approve of whipping the children; he asked me, in fine, if we would instruct aged persons. When I told him that we came to instruct everybody, to announce the word of God to the whole nation, he expressed much delight and gratitude. As soon as he knew us and learned the object of our visit, his prejudices and his appsehensions vanished.

At my first visits, the children would not approach me. I dissipated their fears by giving them cakes or marbles, with which my pockets were always filled. They became familiar, and in a short time they were extremely attached to me. The first who came to school, being very happy, expressed their satisfaction and their delight to their parents, praising the care of the Black-gowns in teaching and feeding them. This news spread abroad. Now the children entreat the parents to suffer them to go to the mission; the parents never refuse them, for the Indian is full of indulgence towards his little ones.

Before the close of the year, those who were received and those who desired to be admitted, surpassed the number that we could lodge. We have ever since been crowded. In a house built for twenty persons only, we were obliged to lodge fifty children. In order to take measures, the nation assembled and requested the agent to petition their Great

Father to augment and enlarge the houses of the mission. The government acceded to this demand.

The chiefs cannot be too much praised for the good example that they have given to the nation, and the ardent desire that they manifested for the education of their daughters. When they first made me this latter request, I found myself singularly embarrassed for the means of realizing so laudable a project. Father Schoenmakers resolved to interest a kind and fervent community of nuns in the education of the Osage girls. With this intention he went to St. Louis; but he knocked in vain at the door of several convents of that city, for the enterprise frightened every one. He was not discouraged. At length he succeeded in obtaining the good and charitable Sisters of Loretto, in Kentucky, for the education of the girls of this remote mission. In the autumn of the year 1847, four religious arrived to share our labors. Their sufferings, their trials, and their privations were very great. They were obliged to sleep in the open air. That did not hinder two other Sisters from coming to join them a little after in their heroic enterprise. Their patience, their kindness, their courage, and their perseverance have gained the esteem, affection, and love of every one. They are succeeding: they have already produced a considerable change, and are doing great good. The talents displayed in the direction of their school, and the rapid progress of the children are admired by all the strangers who visit this community.

In order not to pass the limits of a letter, I will leave the rest till another moment, and I will inclose it to you in a few days.

In the mean time, reverend and very dear Father, I commend myself to your holy sacrifices and your good prayers.

Your ever devoted Brother,

J. J. Bax, S. J.

Letter XXIX.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

The Osages.—The second Letter of Father Bax.

Holland, January, 1857.

Reverend Father:

I inclose the second letter of Father Bax, mentioned in mine of December 1st.

Village of St. Francis Hieronymo, June 10th, 1850.

Rev. and very dear Father:—In my last letter I was obliged, against my inclination, to give you a very abridged description of the truly prosperous state of our schools.

Nothing astonishes the whites more than the extraordinary progress of our little Osages in the different branches taught them. Such are: reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and grammar, for the boys; reading, writing, geography, needlework, embroidery, and drawing, for the girls. To these dispositions all join a very decided taste for music, and find great pleasure in singing pious canticles. They are, besides, very polite, docile, and obedient. As soon as they perceive a white, their first movement is to go and present him the hand. Their sensibility and good dispositions have often alleviated the pain that we experienced when our means would not suffer us to provide for their necessities.

If it happen that one of the Fathers is absent during three or four days, they are on the watch for the moment when

he is expected. As soon as they perceive him, which sometimes takes place at a distance of three or four miles, nothing can hinder them from running to meet him, and crying out: "Father, how are you? how do you do?"

The greater number among them are remarkable for truly admirable sentiments of devotion. Hence religion is the most efficacious means for correcting the faults usual at their age. The most powerful rebuke that we can make them is to ask them: "My child, when you were baptized, did you not promise God that you would be good?" Of a considerable number, we may report great progress in the catechism. Forty have made their first communion. These last visit the Blessed Sacrament with as much regularity and devotion as the most fervent among the faithful.

The above, Rev. Father, gives us the highest consolation. Hardly two years since, these little neophytes were running naked in the woods and on the plains, addicted to every kind of vice, and having no knowledge of their Creator, nor of the end of their creation. Never has the goodness of God been more manifest to me; never have I seen the divine influence more generally felt and better appreciated; never, before this day, have I been so intimately convinced that the Lord offers to all nations, to every family, and to each individual, the means of being saved, and of being united to the Holy Church.

What happened to us on the day of our arrival here, serves as a powerful confirmation of this truth. It was reported to us that an Indian had just died in a village about four miles distant. I expressed to my informant the grief this misfortune caused me. He told me that another man, in the same place, was at the point of death. In the hope of arriving in time to baptize him, I set out immediately. Arrived at the place where the Neosho divides into two

branches, I found the waters so swollen that it was impossible to pass them, and would be so during several days more.

On the fourth day (it was Sunday), a half-blood passed the river on the trunk of a tree, to come and hear mass. I questioned him concerning the state of the sick man. He had been in his agony during four days; he had ever shown an excellent deportment, and had manifested an earnest desire to see the Black-gown, who had come to announce the word of God to his nation. I mounted my horse directly, with some apprehension that my guide might delay my arrival. In this I was mistaken—he reached there more quickly on foot than I on my horse.

I found my Indian extremely ill; evidently he was hastening rapidly to eternity. As soon as I entered the lodge, he saluted me with joy and affection. I made him comprehend, by means of an interpreter, that I came to speak with him of the Great Spirit, and instruct him in the truths necessary to salvation. "I thank thee, Father: thy words are kind and consoling; my heart is overjoyed that thou hast come." Such were the words he addressed me with a dying voice. I spoke to him of the dispositions requisite for receiving baptism, and told him, among other things, that he must renounce all the bad actions that he might have committed, be contrite for them, and never again do evil, though he might be restored to health; that if he was sincerely disposed to act thus, the Great Spirit would forget all the sins of his past life. "Father," he replied, "I always wished to be good; I never stole, I never became drunk, I have never killed. However, if I have offended the Great Spirit, I repent. I desire to please him, so that, if I die, he may have mercy on me, and grant me the grace of being admitted into his presence." Fatigued with the effort he had made to speak, he kept silence during several moments; then, again

opening his eyes, he said: "Father, if thou believest me worthy of receiving baptism, thou wilt grant me a great favor and many blessings." Fully satisfied with the lively desire that he manifested, I administered that sacrament to him. Scarcely was he regenerated in the healing waters of baptism, than he expired, and went to enjoy the happiness reserved to the children of the Church.

The consoling death of this Indian was followed by a most distressing scene. I had never witnessed demonstrations of sorrow so profound. The men, throwing off that stoical indifference which appears to be so natural to them, heaved deep sighs and shed torrents of tears; the women, with dishevelled hair, shricked and gave all the signs of a despair over which reason cannot predominate. I buried the Indian, on the following day, in accordance with the ritual of the Church. The whole village was present at this ceremony. The assistants witnessed the attention and respect which we pay to the dead with a deep gratitude. From that time forth, we have always assisted the sick in their agony. The time for instructing them is very short, and their ideas concerning religion are more than imperfect; but, on the other side, they have all the simplicity and good-will of children, and their dispositions are most consoling.

A few days ago I baptized the oldest man in the nation. Impossible to tell you the impressions I experienced when pouring the holy water over that head, whitened with length of years. Baptism is one of the sacraments of our holy religion that the Indians understand the best, and it is the one that they are most desirous of receiving.

Some incidents, that a few would style providential, and others accidental, have contributed much to augment (in this tribe) faith concerning the efficacy of that sacrament. I will cite but one example.

One evening—it was during the autumn of 1848—an Indian arrived at the Mission. Grief and anxiety were depicted on his face. As soon as he perceived me, he said to me: "Father, come without delay, for my wife is dying. All despair, and I consider her already as dead. Thou didst tell us to call thee when any one was sick or in danger of death. I wish her to learn the words of the Great Spirit before she dies. This is why I come to call thee." I had just arrived from a village called Cawva-Shinka, or Little Village, situated thirty miles from the Mission; I was exhausted with fatigue. But how resist an invitation so pressing, and above all in a circumstance so grave? After a moment of repose, I set out with the man. Arrived at the village at midnight, I found the lodge filled with women and children, crying, and singing the Indian death-song. I besought them to conclude these lugubrious accents, and approached the sick woman, extended on a buffalo-hide, and scarcely covered with some tattered blankets. She was unconscious. As she appeared to me not likely soon to return to herself, I resolved to remain until morning. An Indian had the kindness to lend me his blanket; I wrapped myself in it, and endeavored to take a few hours' rest. But it was vain. I never passed such a miserable night. The women and the children recommenced their frightful clamor; the dogs of the wigwam passed back and forward over me with such steady regularity, that it would have been quite impossible to me to count the number of visits. About daylight, the patient began to give some signs of life; but she could not yet speak. As soon as she had recovered her senses entirely, I made her a short exhortation. She appeared attentive, and gave signs of real joy. I baptized her, and departed. Two hours after my leaving she was perfectly recovered. She arose, took her infant, and nursed it.

Not long after, I returned to the same village, and found myself immediately surrounded by men, women, and children, shouting, unanimously, "Komkai"—we are very glad to see you. This word is used for giving a cordial reception. After recounting to me the fact, and the cure of the sick woman, they brought me twenty-five children to baptize. "Father," said they to me, "we believe thy words. We know that baptism comes from the Great Spirit. We are poor, ignorant people; we cannot read the book that contains the word of the Great Spirit; but thou wilt explain it to us, and we will believe thee." I have had very evident proofs of the sincerity of their good intentions, and of their firm resolution not to offend God, after having received baptism.

About a month ago, I stopped at an Indian wigwam. Its inmates had not been able to go to the chase, on account of the illness of their little daughter. Her mother told me that they were suffering with hunger, and that they had not eaten meat for a long time. She added that she had seen a stray ox in the forest, belonging to a white man, and, that she would have killed it had she not recalled the promise that she had made at her baptism—rather to die than do that which is sinful; that she preferred to die of hunger, to offending the Great Spirit; and, that if she had killed the ox, the Great Spirit would no longer have had compassion on her in her misery. This little recital pleased and edified me. I could not refrain from reflecting, that the condition of the world would be widely different, did all Christians remember as faithfully and practically their baptismal vows as did this poor Indian woman.

So far, we have baptized more than five hundred persons. One hundred adults and children have had the happiness of receiving the sacrament of regeneration before dying. When

the Indians are well taught, we have not much to fear in regard to their exemplary conduct. The greatest obstacle for us is in the difficulty that we experience in acquiring their tongue. It contains very few words, and those quite inconvenient for expressing abstract ideas. These people have some confused ideas of a Supreme Being, of the immortality of the soul, of the bliss or of the chastisements of the future life; but these ideas are mingled with material and superstitious notions. The following is an example: They believe that those whom the Great Spirit admits into his happy abode will there receive an abundance of buffaloes, moose, deer, and corn; that when a person dies, his soul continues to inhabit the place in which it quitted the body; that souls sometimes return from the other world, to take and conduct there other souls. For this reason they fear to travel in the dark, especially when any one is very ill; they think that *then* there certainly is some spirit fluttering about in the air. Some of their Vig-kontah (jugglers) pretend, on many occasions, to have the power of chasing this spirit, and of saving the life of the person who is dangerously sick. When there is danger of death, the most superstitious have frequent recourse to these "medicine men;" a horse, a mule, or even several, must reward these services. I knew one of those impostors who by this trade had gained, in one spring only, thirty-two horses. Their efforts tend principally to persuading the poor Indians not to call upon us in their maladies. They declare, with the greatest assurance, that they will annul the efficaciousness of our power.

Last spring I went to pay a visit to the Little Osages. The day of my arrival, I baptized three persons who were dangerously sick; they died the next day. Some days after, a malignant fever broke out, and proved fatal to many. The jugglers attributed the cause of the scourge to my presence,

declaring that I had annihilated their power over the spirits. It is afflicting, but also somewhat laughable, to see these jugglers endeavoring to drive away the spirits. They make themselves as hideous as possible, equip themselves with all their instruments and weapons, discharge their guns, brandish their clubs and tomahawks, beat the drum, and have recourse, in fine, to whatever can produce a noise ; in a word, they employ all imaginable tricks to deceive those poor Indians. But their power, which was formerly very great, is beginning to decline. The esteem which the savages had for them is daily diminishing. The Indians are attached to us, principally, say they, because we have no wives and children. "If you had," they say, "you would do like the missionaries (the presbyterians) who preceded you, you would think too much of your families, and you would neglect the red-man and his children."

I often go and visit them in their villages, and I am always received with the greatest civility. A crier precedes me, to announce my approach. When they are all collected in a large wigwam, or beneath the wide-spread branches of some stately tree, I begin my instruction. They listen most attentively. When I have done speaking, the chief rises, and addresses his tribe some words of paternal advice, and repeats what the missionary has said, or makes comments on it. One Sunday a chief named Pai-nonpashe, of the *Great-Hill Village*, on the Verdigris River, came to see his two children, who were boarding with us. A short instruction, which I gave after mass, produced such an impression on his mind, that, when returning home, he said to a half-breed who accompanied him : "I begin now to discover what we must do to be agreeable to the Great Spirit, and to become happy in this life and in the other."

The excellent health enjoyed by our children at the mis

sion school, greatly astonishes the parents. Indeed, thus far sickness has been unknown among them; not one of them has died since we have been here. This contributes much to augment the confidence which the Indians feel towards us, and dissipates all their fears during the season of the great hunts, in which they are obliged to remove from us for several months.

When the frightful ravages caused by the cholera along the river Kansas, at Westport, and in other places, were known here, the Osages, panic-struck, immediately resolved to go and seek their safety in the plains. Some desired to conduct their children with them; but the majority opposed it, in the firm persuasion that they would be in security under the care of the Black-gowns, and protected by the Son of God and his Holy Mother. They therefore retired to the plains, and left their children with us. They had been but a short time in their new abode, when the cholera declared itself in the most terrible manner, and carried off a great number. Perceiving their error in having fled from the mission, they hastened to return, and encamp, as they said, quite near the kind Fathers. They consequently hastened with such precipitation that they made no provision, and travelled day and night. In proportion as they reached their own lands, the scourge diminished. The last case of death occurred at fifteen miles from the mission.

The greatest difficulties we encounter arise from the half-bloods, almost all of French origin. They have nothing of the Catholic but baptism, and an inviolable attachment to their creed, of which, for want of instruction, they know almost nothing, and they practise still less. They have, again and again, proved to the Protestant ministers that their efforts to make them change their religion were absolutely useless.

Another obstacle for us is the mode of life that the Indians are obliged to lead, in order to procure the provisions that are necessary for their subsistence. They commonly pass six months of the year in the chase, which forces them to remove from us, and exposes the morality of those who would wish to live as exemplary Christians, to great temptations and dangers. I hope that this state of affairs will change; for many are already convinced that they cannot long rely on the game, and that they should have already commenced cultivating their grounds, had they but the means necessary.

A deputation of the nation, composed of the principal chief, of five warriors, and an interpreter, went to pay a visit to their "Great Father." President Taylor received them with the greatest kindness, and encouraged them to commence cultivating their lands. I cannot express to you the gratitude that I experience when I think of the truly paternal care lavished on my dear savages by their Great Father, and by *all the officers* employed in the Indian department. The savages have been greatly flattered by it. I am fully convinced that great good will result from it.

This, Rev. Father, is but an imperfect sketch of the state of our mission, in which we hope to gather many fruits of salvation, if it please God that we remain in it. Pecuniary difficulties have placed, and still place us in very critical positions; but, Rev. Father, the assistance that we sometimes receive from the Propagation of the Faith, from some generous hearts and friends of the Indians, relieves us. We hope in divine Providence for all and in all. "God is faithful." Commend us to the prayers of your pious congregation, and of your kind community in St. Louis.

Reverend and most dear Father,

Your devoted brother in Jesus Christ,

J. J. Bax, S. J.

Letter XXX.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

The Osages.—Third Letter of Father Bax.

Brussels, January 25, 1857.

Reverend Father:

This letter is the last written by the Rev. Father Bax. I gave you an extract from it in my 22d Letter, when sketching the biography of that zealous missionary, who fell a victim to his devotedness in the malady, the ravages of which he here mentions:

Mission among the Osages, St. Francis Hieronymo, April 18, 1852.

Reverend and dear Father:—I desired to write to you much sooner, but we have been for some time, and are yet, in a terrible crisis. I have never witnessed aught like it; yet God's gracious will be done!

About three weeks before the grand solemnity of Easter, forty-five children of our boarding-school fell sick, in an interval of three days and a half. At first, we could not discern the nature of the malady. It commenced by a heavy cold, attended with a burning fever. After four or five days, the measles broke out. At first the alarm was not very great, but the measles disappeared and was replaced by a putrid fever. On Passion Sunday, the saddest of my

life, we had two corpses laid out, and about twelve of our children in danger of death. Eleven of our scholars fell victims in a short time, and two will perhaps speedily follow them. We are obliged to interrupt the school for some time, until this terrible visitation be passed. The contagion is spreading among the Indians, and the mortality is very great. It will be difficult to collect again the scattered flock. However, I may say, that never hitherto, either among people of color or whites, either among persons of the world or religious, have I been witness to so much piety and fervor on the bed of death, as were exhibited by our young neophytes. They may serve as models. Some, prompted by their own piety, asked to hold the crucifix in their hands, and pressed it fervently to them, without being willing to yield it, during more than two hours. They wished the statue of the Blessed Virgin to be placed near the pillows of their beds. They implored the assistance of their holy Mother, and fixed their dying eyes on her image. I firmly hope and believe that they already enjoy the presence of God.

The Lord seems to be willing to gather into his garner the little that we have sowed here below. What may be the designs of Providence for the future, we cannot and dare not conjecture. We have lost several of our best scholars, and of those on whom we had founded our greatest expectations.

Reverend and dear father,

Your very devoted servant

and brother in Jesus Christ,

J. J. Bax, S. J.

Letter XXXI.

To a Father of the Society of Jesus.*

Conversion of Randolph Benton, son of Thomas H. Benton.

Reverend and dear Father:

While Kossuth was in our midst, stirring up civil and religious dissensions, God consoled his calumniated children by the conversion of several Protestants. To comply with the wish expressed in your last letter, I will relate to you the details of the conversion of young Mr. Randolph Benton, the only son of the distinguished and Hon. Thomas H. Benton, one of the most eminent statesmen of this vast republic.

This great man, who, for thirty years, with the greatest distinction and with a patriotic zeal, has served his country as Senator from Missouri, professes, with the rest of his family, the Presbyterian religion. Young Randolph, possessed of talent, and yet very young, had been difficult to manage, and had proved the source of a good deal of anxiety to his worthy parents, particularly to his aged father, who had formed great hopes of him. The son was only twenty-two years and four months old when he died, and yet, though so young, he had rambled over the greater portion of the United States, New Mexico, California, and Oregon. At the age of fourteen he accompanied his brother-in-law, the celebrated

* This letter was transmitted by Father De Smet, after Col. Benton's death, to the "N. Y. Freeman's Journal," and published May 1, 1858.

Colonel Fremont, in the exploration of the Great Western Desert. Four years later, he resided for some time at Westphalia, Missouri, where we had a residence, and there applied himself to the study of the German, under the instruction of one of our Fathers, and perhaps it is owing to this circumstance, that ever since he has felt so much respect for our holy religion. I will briefly relate the details of his conversion.

He had returned from New Mexico to St. Louis, and for some weeks had been staying with his parents. He conceived the idea of applying himself to the study of the sciences and of the ancient languages, and of rapidly acquiring a knowledge of them. In this intention, and by the advice of his father, he called upon the President of the University,* and asked to be admitted to its classes as an extern, if his age should be an objection to his entrance as a boarder. The arrangements for his admission had all been fixed, when a few days later he was attacked with bilious diarrhœa, which very quickly prostrated him.

It was at this moment that, meeting the honored Senator, I was informed by him of the sad news of his son's dangerous illness. At his request I visited the invalid, and found him in a condition truly alarming. Young Randolph expressed to me the very great joy he felt upon seeing me, and thanked me warmly for my visit. I seated myself by his sick couch, and exhorted him to place all his confidence in divine Providence, and in the mercy of our Redeemer. He listened to me with marked attention, and at the same time manifested sentiments both of piety and resignation to God's will. "O God," he exclaimed,—"yes, O God, thou dost send to us what is best!" I then spoke to him of the essen-

* St. Louis University.

tial points of our religion, to all of which Randolph expressed his assent, couched in words replete with fervor and piety. The Senator was present during the interview, and seeing in his son such Christian sentiments, affectionately clasped my hand, and leading me away a little distance from the bed, said to me with transport, "Oh, but it is consoling! The words of my son fill me with joy, despite the grief which tears my heart. God be blessed. If he dies he will die a Christian." The venerable old man then burst into tears, and retired into a neighboring room in order to conceal his emotion. I returned to the bedside of Randolph, and he announced to me his desire of being received into the Catholic Church. "I desire, with all my heart," he said, "to be baptized. It is a great boon which Heaven vouchsafes to me. My father certainly will consent to it." I immediately entered the apartment to which his father had retired, to communicate his son's wish, and to console him by the condition of his son in a religious point of view. I also spoke of the urgency and the necessity of baptism. The Senator willingly consented. He would have desired that the ceremony should be postponed for a few hours "until the opiates, which for a day past had been given to the patient, should have procured for him a little sleep," but there was danger in thus delaying. This forced sleep made me uneasy. I remarked to the Senator that the ceremony could not in any manner disturb the patient's sleep, except for a very few moments; it might have a beneficial effect in tranquillizing his mind. He affectionately asked me to perform for his son the duties of my holy ministry. The latter learned this consent with joy and gratitude, and immediately prepared himself to receive the holy sacrament of baptism. While I was administering it to him, he devoutly crossed his arms over his breast, and raising his eyes to heaven prayed

with fervor, thanking God for the signal grace accorded to him. I then left him, urging him to try and take some sleep. I left in order to procure the blessed sacrament of the holy oils. An hour later I received the following note, written by Colonel Benton:

HALF-PAST 11 O'CLOCK, March 16, 1852.

MY DEAR FATHER DE SMET:

I went into the room the moment you left me. He immediately said to me, "Are you pleased with what I have done?" I said, "I am;" and then engaged him to yield to the opiates he had taken, and go to sleep. He said, "Excitement and happiness have done more for me than sleep could do," and immediately turning his eyes to heaven as he lay on his back, the head raised on the pillow, he said in a clear, calm, modulated voice, and radiant look, "Thank God, I am happy!" Then turning his eyes to me, with the same voice and look, he repeated the words to me, and said, "I intended to do it long ago, but did not know whether you would like it." I told him he made me happy. And truly it is the first feeling of relief I have had in these five terrible days and nights. So, dear Father, all is in your hands now. You are giving peace to me in giving it to him.

Affectionately,

THOS. H. BENTON.

In another letter of Colonel Benton to me, on the day subsequent to the death of his son, he wrote as follows:

DEAR FATHER DE SMET:

This is to introduce to you Mr. Burke, a school comrade and friend of my poor child years ago. I wish you to

talk with him. He will show that it was indeed long (in his short life) that he meditated the step he took—even four years ago. He will give to you gratifying details, as he has to me, and will show (what you and I well knew, from himself and from our observation) that it was not the near approach of death and the sick-bed that brought him to this act, but his own heart, in the happiest state of his health and mind.

THOS. H. BENTON.

Young Randolph, during his last hours, was surrounded by many of his near relatives and friends. During his lucid moments he did not cease to manifest the deepest gratitude to the divine goodness, that he should have been led back to the fold of Christ. He received the last sacraments with sentiments of great fervor; and tranquilly, about sunrise of the 17th March, 1852, went to sleep in the Lord, confident in the hope that he exchanged this mortal life for another and a happier one forever in heaven. The funeral services were performed at the cathedral. The Most Rev. Archbishop himself officiated and pronounced a beautiful discourse, well suited to the occasion. These circumstances, together with the edifying scenes of the last moments, and of the conversion of his son, cannot fail to leave a deep and favorable impression upon the mind and the heart of the venerable and illustrious Senator; for he shared the happy sentiments so piously and so tenderly expressed by his son, before and after the latter had had the happiness to receive the grace of baptism.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

P. J. DE SMET, S. J.

Letter XXXII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Religious Situation of St. Louis and St. Ferdinand.—Death of Rev. Father Bax.—The Osages.

Reverend Father:

The following is the copy of a letter which I wrote to the Canon De la Croix, at Ghent. If that respected ecclesiastic will allow its publication, it may form the continuation of those which I have already addressed you:

St. Joseph's College, Kentucky, April 16, 1855.

Reverend Sir:—I am informed, by a letter from one of our Fathers in Belgium, that you have authorized him to announce to us an advantageous donation, allowed by the "Propagation of the Faith" in Lyons, for the purpose of aiding the society in its labors in Missouri, which, at the present time, extends into several other States and Territories, situated in the West of this vast republic. I thank you, in the name of the Rev. Father Provincial, with sentiments of the most sincere and heartfelt gratitude.

Since the period of your departure, there have been many changes in the *wild-woods* which you were one of the first to evangelize. I thought it would give you pleasure to enter into some details concerning the cities of St. Louis and of

St. Ferdinand, with which you were formerly so well acquainted, and of the nomadic tribe of the Osages, of which you were the earliest apostle.

In 1823, St. Louis counted but 3000 or 4000 inhabitants. There was but one poor Catholic church—and two schools were all that she could boast. At the present day her population exceeds 120,000 souls; there is a handsome cathedral, with eleven other churches, a seminary for the secular clergy, a large and magnificent hospital, directed by the Sisters of St. Vincent of Paul; a college of one hundred and fifty boarders, one hundred and twenty half-boarders and externs, and three hundred or four hundred children gratuitously admitted. There is a boarding-school for the children of good families, under the direction of the Brothers of the Christian schools; the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, the Sisters of the Visitation, and the Ursulines, have handsome and extensive boarding-schools for young ladies. Five asylums, for the two sexes, contain beyond five hundred children; and there is also a foundling hospital. A house of retreat is opened to penitents, and to young girls in danger. Eleven or twelve schools for boys and girls, are conducted by religious. I regret that I have not the statistics of the *fructus animarum* (fruit of souls); it must be extremely consoling, for all the churches are very well frequented.

The fervor of the Catholics corresponds everywhere to the zeal of their pastors. The union and harmony which reign between the secular and regular clergy, under the paternal administration of our venerable archbishop, contributes much to propagate our holy religion, and to maintain the fervor of the faithful in St. Louis. The Faith keeps pace with the rapid and wonderful increase of our flourishing city, which you saw in its cradle!

The following are some details of the spiritual fruits which

rejoice the pastors of the church of St. Francis Xavier: In the course of the last year the communions exceeded fifty thousand. Every year the conversions of Protestants to the Catholic religion amounts to as many as sixty or eighty. The two Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin number more than four hundred members, belonging to every rank of society—lawyers, physicians, merchants, clerks, and artists, are members of them; all approach the holy table once a month, and wear the miraculous medal of our good Mother. The Archconfraternity numbers from five thousand to six thousand members; the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, two thousand. The sunday-school attached to the church is frequented by nearly one thousand children.

From St. Louis to St. Ferdinand, or Florissant, fifteen miles distant, there is a succession of beautiful farms and neat country residences. You would not easily, Reverend Sir, recognize it now. The convent, of which you were the founder, has been enlarged since your departure, and has passed into the hands of the Lorettines, a branch of the house of Loretto, in Kentucky, instituted by the venerable M. Nerinckx. The farm, formerly belonging to the bishop, is greatly extended. Of the old cottage, and of the crib which served you as a bed, there now remains but an edifying remembrance—our brothers have replaced them by a novitiate and scholasticate, built of hewn stone; these two establishments contain, at the present day, a community of nearly sixty religious, forty of whom are novices; among the latter many Americans.

You will undoubtedly be gratified to have some news of the mission of St. Francis Hieronymo among the Osages, to whom you were the first to announce the consolations of the everlasting Gospel. The seed of salvation which you planted, and which was afterwards neglected, has not been sterile.

You are acquainted with the difficulties of the Osage mission. Being in the neighborhood of the boundary line of the United States, these Indians learn to adopt, very easily, all the vices of the whites, without joining to them any of their virtues, They forget the frugality and simplicity which formerly characterized them, and give themselves up to intemperance and the perfidiousness of civilized life. However, every year a considerable number of adults enter the bosom of the Church; a great number of children receive baptism, and as they often die very young, they are so many innocent souls who intercede in heaven for the conversion of their unhappy parents, buried in the grossest superstition and idolatry of paganism.

In the spring of 1852 an epidemic malady, which made great ravages, became for a large number (although weakening the power of their nation) a blessed occasion of salvation. The violence of this disease, against which the Indian cannot be easily induced to take necessary precautions, the sufferings of the whole tribe, the universal panic, the grief—all these miseries presenting themselves under a thousand different forms—wrung the hearts of the missionaries. Naught but the reflection that Providence had sent this terrible scourge for their spiritual good, was capable of consoling them.

During this unhappy year, and when the extreme violence of the epidemic had ceased, we were called to deplore the loss of Father Bax, who fell a victim of truly heroic charity, exercised towards the poor savages, in order to soothe their sufferings, and win their souls to God. Father Bax was born on the 15th of January, 1817, in a village near Turnhout, in Belgium. The disease, which commenced among the children of the mission, spread rapidly throughout all the villages of the tribe. Father Bax, by his knowledge of medicine, and the cures which he effected, was renowned

throughout the nation. The savages came in troops from every side to call him into their camps. It would be difficult to form an idea of all the fatigues he was obliged to endure. From early morning, after having given some assistance to the children of the mission school, he would go into the environs, from cabin to cabin, bearing gladness and comfort in his passage. He afterwards would turn his steps to the other camps of the nation, to offer them the same blessings. To do the last, it became necessary to employ several days, and endure very heavy fatigue in visiting them. The zealous religious administered the last sacraments to the dying, baptized the expiring infants, taught the catechumens, exhorted, and often succeeded in converting, the most obstinate. He performed at once the office of physician, catechist, and priest. He returned to the house of the missionaries, exhausted with fatigue, only to renew on the morrow the same deeds of charity, braving the inclemency of the seasons—the frequent rains of spring, the sudden and overpowering heat of summer, with the sudden cold which succeeds the heat in these sections, at this epoch of the year.

All this devotedness was not capable of hindering the malice of some enemies—let us rather say, the rage of hell, irritated at the view of so many souls rescued from its grasp. The devil invented against the excellent missionary, and against the whole mission, a calumny,—extremely ridiculous, without doubt, in the eyes of the civilized, but entirely in accordance with Indian prejudices, superstition, and credulity. A report was spread throughout the camps, that the whites were the authors of the scourge; that the Black-gowns (the priests) had a magical charm, vulgarly called medicine, which killed all the Indians; that this charm was a certain *book*, in which they inscribed the names of the Osages, and thereby obtained a power of life or death over all those

whose names the book contained. The register of baptisms was meant. They hold the superstitious belief that whosoever possesses a book, has an absolute empire over the life of those whose names are written in it. The calumny spread from village to village, in all the cabins; as it was propagated, its details assumed a darker hue. The malevolent went about exhorting their companions to attack the mission, saying that they would arrest the course of the malady, if they could attain the destruction of the terrible magical charm, by burning the enchanted book possessed by the missionaries. This absurd tale was sufficient to engage several parents to withdraw their children from the mission school.

Fortunately, the Black-gowns had influential friends among the chiefs of the Osages. They went no farther—on reasoning with the most intelligent Indians, they succeeded in appeasing their rage and ill-will. The Lord, who permits the rising of the tempest, can calm it at his own good time!

Heaven accorded its benedictions to the efforts of Father Bax and his companions in this painful ministry. Of nearly 1500 savages, who were swept away by the epidemic, all, with a very few exceptions, had the happiness of being fortified by the last sacraments of the Church before dying. Seized, at last, himself with symptoms of the illness, Father Bax continued his ordinary labors, and dragged himself around to visit the sick and dying. His zeal would not suffer him to attend to himself. Strength soon failed him. He was dying while still laboring! He was obliged, at last, to consent to allow himself to be transported about forty miles from the mission, to Fort Scott, a military post, where one of the most skilful physicians of the United States army then resided. It was too late, all the cares of the doctor, proved useless. The good religious, the indefatigable mis-

sionary, was a fruit ripe for heaven. At the end of six weeks he died as he had lived. His last aspirations showed still his unfading zeal for the conversion of his dear savages.

During the five years that he passed in the missions, he brought back to the faith a great number of half-bloods, formerly baptized in the Church, but for want of priests and instructions, unfortunately perverted by Protestant ministers; besides, he baptized more than 2000 Indians, as well children as adults, of every age. He instructed his neophytes with the greatest care, and the most pains-taking assiduity. His charity had so gained the hearts, that all these savages called him only by the beautiful word, which in the Osage language signifies, "the Father who is all heart."

His death excited profound regret. His fellow-religious cherished him, and had always been edified by his example and his virtues; the whites whom he visited on the frontiers of the States, whom he fortified and encouraged in the abandonment in which he found them, loved him as a protector; but his loss was especially felt by the tribe which he evangelized with so much constancy, ardor, and success.

Some days before his death, Father Bax wrote me as follows:

"The contagion is spreading among the Indians, and the mortality is very great. The difficulty will be, to collect the scattered flock; however, I have the consolation of being able to say, that never yet, either among the negroes, or among the whites, or among religious, or among persons of the world, have I ever been witness to as much fervor and piety on the bed of death. Edifying is the death of which our young neophytes have given the example. Some, of their own free will, asked to hold the crucifix in their hands; they clasped it without leaving it, for more than two hours

The statue of the Blessed Virgin was to be placed by their pillows. Imploring the assistance of their good Mother, they fixed their dying eyes on her image. I have the strong hope that they already enjoy the presence of God. The Lord seems to wish to gather into his granary the little that we have sowed here below. What may be the designs of his Providence for the future of our mission, we cannot, and we dare not conjecture. May His holy will be accomplished!"

This is the last letter I had the happiness of receiving from Father Bax.

The Osage nation, like the greater part of the other tribes of the Great Western Desert, which were formerly so numerous and flourishing, is rapidly diminishing in numbers. It is now reduced to 3000 souls, and divided into twelve villages, situated in different directions around the centre of the mission. Ordinarily, the Osages dwell or encamp in the valleys on the borders of the rivers, or near some spring of pure and overflowing water. They live, for the most part, as in the primitive times, on the roots and spontaneous fruits of the earth, and the animals which they kill in the chase.

There are but two Fathers to visit these different villages, situated at the distance of fifty and seventy miles from each other. The toils and fatigues of the holy ministry there are excessive. The catechumens must be instructed, the neophytes sustained, the sick and dying visited, and continual efforts made to convert obstinate adults. Amid so many obstacles, so many privations and difficulties, the missionaries find also sweet consolations in the fruits which the Lord deigns to grant to their labors. Every year they baptize among the Osages about two hundred and fifty persons.

The missionaries also visit the neighboring tribes, such as the Quapaws, who number only three hundred and fifty,

and of whom one hundred and thirty adults and children have been baptized in the course of the last two years. Entire families have received baptism among the Piorias and the Miamis. The Senecas, the Cherokees, Creeks, Shawnees, and other nations, situated two hundred miles south of the mission, can be visited only once or twice in the year. Notwithstanding the opposition of Protestant ministers, there are some Catholics among all these tribes. A great number of European Catholic families live dispersed on the frontiers of the States of Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas, which border on the Indian territory now called Kansas. They receive, from time to time, the visit and the spiritual aid of one or other Father of the mission of St. Francis Hieronymo. The sight of a priest, the happiness of hearing mass, and of approaching the holy table, draw tears of joy from these excellent children of the Church. Without these visits they would be entirely abandoned. The destitution of priests is one of the principal causes of the defection of thousands of Catholics, who gradually lose their faith.

Two boarding-schools have been established in the mission of the Osages: one for boys, under the direction of a Father and of several brothers; the other for girls, under the direction of the Sisters of the Loretto, from Kentucky. These two schools ordinarily contain more than a hundred Indian children. They teach them the elements of literature, with the principles of civilization, at the same time that they excite and cultivate piety in their hearts. These schools encourage the hope, that the day will come when these savage tribes may become changed and civilized and Christian communities. It will be difficult, above all, in these districts, to bring the adults to this mode of existence: they are too much accustomed to the nomadic life; too proud of their barbarous independence, and frequently enslaved to the de-

grading vices of the whites, and to the immoderate use of ardent spirits, which they easily obtain by their commerce with the latter, and in their frequent visits to the frontiers of the States. Each sincere and durable conversion among these, is a miracle of grace.

The United States government grants to the Osages, for the support of their schools, an annual subsidy, accruing from the sale of their lands. This assistance being insufficient, and in order to give a striking testimony of attachment and friendship towards the Black-gowns, all the chiefs of the nation have obtained, by treaty, from the government, an augmentation of funds destined to the maintenance of the schools; and also a liberal donation for making provision for the other necessities of the mission. The mission owns a farm, which contributes towards defraying its expenses. With all this, it may be said, that the missionaries are still obliged to live a poor and hard life, in the midst of many privations. Yet it must be admitted, that the mission among the Osages is established on a tolerably solid footing.

We give the following extract from the annual message of the President of the United States, in 1854. The agent of the Osages, in his report to the government, speaking of this nation, says:

"The schools, under the direction of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, among the Osages, are very flourishing. These Fathers merit great eulogiums for their endeavors to ameliorate the condition of this nation. Having had the pleasure of assisting at the examination of their scholars, I cheerfully add my testimony to that of others in favor of the method pursued in these establishments. I doubt whether there are any schools in the Indian territory which exercise so salutary an influence on the minds of the Indians, or that can even be compared with them. The pupils progress rap-

idly in their studies; they are well fed and well clothed, and appear happy and satisfied.

"The Catholic establishment, as well as the whole nation of the Osages, have met with an irreparable loss by the death of the indefatigable Father Bax. The most rigorous season could never hinder him from visiting the most remote tribes of the nation, when there was question of carrying consolation to the sick, and of accomplishing the duties of his sacred ministry."

We cannot without sighing cast a look over the immense Indian territory, which stretches far away to the Rocky Mountains. There a great number of nations still continue their errant life. There remains but a feeble ray of hope that they will obtain spiritual aid. It is not because the field is barren; it has been already explored by the Fathers Hocken and Point, both of the Society of Jesus, and by the Rev. Messrs Bellecourt and Ravoux. I have gone over its whole extent at different periods. All the missionaries declare unanimously, that everywhere, in all their visits, they have been received with the most touching deference by the savages; that the various tribes have testified the deepest interest in our holy religion. Several thousand children and a great number of adults, particularly among the Black-Feet, the Crows, the Sioux, Poncahs, Ricaries, Minataries, Cheyennes, and the Rapahoes, have already been regenerated in the holy waters of baptism. The personal and material means have hitherto been wanting for beginning therein durable establishments. The Indians year after year renew their invitations. We shall continue to supplicate the Master of the vineyard, to deign to send us auxiliaries, so as to diffuse our missions in this extensive region. "The harvest is great, but the laborers are few."

By a letter recently received from the Rocky Mountains,

and written by Father Joset, I learn that the Indians of our different missions in Oregon continue to give much consolation to their missionaries, by their zeal and fervor in the holy practices of religion. "I hope," writes Father Joset, "that the Sacrament of Confirmation, that they have just received, will give greater stability to their good resolutions. Although the arrival of Mgr. Blanchet was announced only some hours before (for there is as yet no post in those wilds), and that we found it impossible to assemble more than half of the neophytes, the prelate however gave Confirmation to more than six hundred faithful. The pastor was enchanted with our missions and our neophytes. The conversions to the faith in these missions are every year very consoling."

Our new establishments in California succeed well; our college of Santa Clara has nearly a hundred boarders.

Be so good, Reverend Sir, as to present my most humble respect and esteem to Monseigneur, the bishop of Ghent; to the President of the Ecclesiastical Seminary, to the Canons, Van Crombrugghe, De Smet Helias, De Decker, and to our Reverend Fathers.

Commend me, if you please, to the prayers of your good Religious, and allow me to commit myself in a particular manner to your memento at the Holy Sacrifice, in which union I have the honor to be

Your most humble and most obedient servant,

P. J. De Smet, S. J

Letter XXXIII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

The Mormons.

University of St. Louis, Jan. 19, 1858.

Rev. and dear Father:

I propose to give you in this letter a short sketch of the fanatic sect of Mormons, against whom the government of the United States has just sent troops, in order to subject them to the laws, or force them to leave the country. The facts which I will relate on the origin and history of this singular people, are chiefly drawn from a recent work by John Hyde, who had been an elder or minister of the Mormon sect.

The founder of the Mormons was one Joseph Smith, born of an obscure family, December 23, 1805, at Sharon, Windsor county, Vermont. The whole life of this man, from youth up, was marked by fanaticism, fraud, and vice. More than fifty persons of good reputation and in every way worthy of respect, who knew him at Palmyra, New York, where he had settled with his family, have testified under oath that Joseph Smith was regarded as a man of no moral character and given, to vicious habits. In 1820 Smith embraced Methodism. In April of that year he pretended to have had a revelation from Heaven, while praying in the wood. He said that God the Father, and Jesus Christ his Son, had appeared to him, and had declared to him that his

sins were forgiven, that God had chosen him to restore his kingdom on earth, and propagate anew the truth of the Gospel, which all Christendom had lost. In 1823, Smith, forgetting his revelations and his pretended divine mission, plunged as deep as ever in blasphemy, fraud, drunkenness, and other vices. Then, he said, an angel appeared to him and revealed the existence of a book, written on gold plates, and containing the history of the ancient inhabitants of America. This is the origin of the "Book of Mormon," or Golden Bible, the Koran of these Mahometans. The next day Smith visited the spot designated by the angel as the spot where the book was. This was on the slope of a hill between Palmyra and Manchester. There he pretended to find in fact golden plates in a stone box; but this time his efforts to raise them were vain. There was, he says, a great contest between the devil and the angels as to it; but although the devil was beaten, the angel did not give the book to Smith, who received it only four years after, on the 22d of September, 1827.

The Book of Mormon is, like the Koran, a tissue of contradictory plagiarisms and absurd inventions. The whole is nterlarded with passages from the Bible. It has been proved that the portion given as historical is merely a plagiary of a romance of Solomon Spalding, whose manuscript had been stolen by Smith. Spalding had written, under the title of *The Discovered Manuscript*, a romance on the origin of the American Indians. He died before publishing it. After his death, his widow removed to New York, and Smith is known have worked near her house. Some time after the publication of the Book of Mormon, she discovered the loss of her husband's manuscript. Many of Spalding's relatives and friends detected the *Discovered Manuscript*, slightly altered, in Smith's book. Spalding had been in the habit of reading

long passages from his novel; the singularity of the facts, names, and style, which was biblical, had so struck them that they did not forget it. Now, the Book of Mormon had the same characteristics, the same strange names, the same incredible facts, the same style. John Spalding, the author's brother, thus expresses himself on the point: "My brother's book was entitled the Discovered Manuscript. It was an historical novel on the first inhabitants of America. Its object was to show that the American Indians were descended from the Jews, or the lost tribes. There was a detailed description of their voyage, by land and sea, from their departure from Jerusalem to their arrival in America, under the orders of Nephi and Lehi. I have recently read the Book of Mormon. To my great astonishment, I have found almost the same historical matters, the same names, &c., such as they were in my brother's writings." Many other persons, who knew Solomon Spalding well, and who for the most part knew nothing of Joseph Smith, gave similar testimony under oath.

The Book of Mormon probably derives its name from one of the chapters of this novel. A descendant of Lehi obtained the plates of gold, brass, &c., on which the prophets had engraved the history of the voyages and wars of their race, and this descendant was called *Mormon*. He abridged this history, and gave it to his son, Moroni. The latter, having added a sketch of the history of Jared, inclosed all in a box, which he buried on a hill, A. D. 400. Smith, declaring himself chosen to give this wonderful book to the world, pretended to have received the gift of understanding and translating it. He did not write this translation himself, but dictated it. During the dictation, he was concealed behind a curtain, made of a bed-quilt, for the plates were so sacred that he did not even permit his secretary to gaze on them. To give a

still higher idea of his golden bible, he explained the title after his own fashion. According to him, the word *Mormon* comes from the Egyptian *mon*, signifying *good*, and the English word *more;* so that *Mormon* means *Better!* Now, the Bible, says Smith, in its widest signification, means *good*, since our Lord says in the Gospel, "I am the good shepherd." The ignorant and fanatical believe all those fables.

The Book of Mormon, although most known, is not the chief book of the sect. The *Book of Teachings and Covenants*, containing some of the revelations which Smith pretended to have received from heaven, is regarded by his disciples as a book of the law which God has given this generation. Smith also published other revelations, which are contained in a little book called *The Pearl of Great Price.* Much of the doctrine of Smith is a mere repetition of the works of various Protestant sects. He has imitated Mahomet in his infamous immorality, by permitting polygamy. To all this, his successor has added abominable doctrines on the nature and attributes of God.

Smith organized his new religion in 1830. He could then number only six disciples. The next year, having obtained new adherents, he sent elders, two by two, to preach the new doctrine. When the number of his disciples had sufficiently increased, he founded a colony in Missouri, but their conduct induced the people of that State—first those around Independence, where the Mormons had first settled, and then those of Liberty—to expel them from the State. In 1834 the Mormon sect adopted the pompous title of "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints," and thence the Mormons called themselves *Latter-Day Saints*, or simply *Saints.*

Smith and his adepts having acquired, in 1839, a large tract in Illinois, in a beautiful section on the banks of the

Mississippi, built a flourishing city, which they called *Nauvoo*, erected a magnificent temple, now in ruins, and lived there till 1844, when they rendered themselves odious to the people of that State. They were attacked by an ungovernable mob, and the false prophet and his brother, Hiram, were massacred in prison, at Carthage.

In 1845 these persecutions continued, and the Mormons, driven at last from Nauvoo, resolved, in council, to seek a solitary and permanent abode in some fertile valley at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. They carried out this project in 1847, penetrated into the desert some twelve hundred miles, and founded a new city on the banks of the Great Salt Lake, at the foot of a lofty chain of mountains forming a portion of the eastern limits of the Great Basin. Brigham Young, Smith's successor as prophet and chief, was their leader in this long and painful march.

The valley of the Great Basin is about five hundred miles long from north to south, and three hundred and fifty from east to west. It is formed by the Sierra Madre bounding it on the east, and by the Goose Creek and Humboldt mountains on the west. Utah Territory, thus occupied by the Mormons, contains in all 187,923 square miles. The lake, which is now only seventy miles long and thirty-five wide, probably filled, at a remote epoch, the whole valley. On all sides, on the slopes of the mountains, at a uniform height, are traces which water alone could have made. In 1841, I traversed much of this valley, in my rambles in the Rocky Mountains. The country was then wooded and agreeable, watered by springs and streams, winding through the valley. Since the Mormon emigration, the forests have disappeared on the slopes of the hills and mountains, and, as the snows are more exposed to the rays of the sun and melt quicker, the springs dry up, and the streams give scarcely water

enough in the spring to irrigate the cultivated fields and supply the domestic animals.

Salt Lake City contains, at present, 15,000 inhabitants. They are mostly English, Scotch, and Swedes. Hardly one fourth of the Mormons are Americans by birth. They are scattered up and down, in the villages and towns of all the plains and valleys of Utah, so called from an Indian tribe of that region. The Territory is bounded on the north by Oregon, on the west by California, on the east by the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, and on the south by New Mexico. The total number of the inhabitants of the Territory is less than 50,000, although the Mormon leaders, for ends of their own, represent it as much higher. The number of Mormons, in different countries, is estimated at 300,000. They send their emissaries to all parts of the globe. These take good care not to present Mormonism in its true colors, to those who are not as yet prepared to accept it such as it is. Many of the Mormons at Salt Lake, it is said, adopted the new sect only in hopes of finding there an earthly paradise, with unlimited abundance for every want. Once in Utah, it is no easy matter to escape the snares and despotic power of the leader.

Brigham Young, president of the Mormon church, and now rebellious governor of Utah Territory, enjoys absolute authority over his people. This man is, like Joseph Smith, a native of Vermont, born at Whittingham, June 1, 1801. Having embraced Mormonism in 1832, he soon became Smith's intimate friend. Since he became chief of the Mormons, he has displayed boundless ambition, and talents far superior to Smith's. He labors to establish Mormonism all over the American continent. As to the Territory which he governs, he wishes to make it an independent State in the confederation. He has often declared that he will permit

no one else to be governor of Utah. He defies the authority of the President, and of all the Union. The judges and other officers appointed by the general government for the civil administration of Utah, have been expelled from the territory, after seeing it useless to attempt to exercise their functions. Young has set up tribunals of his own, and in the United States courts which he tolerated before his rebellion, the juries gave verdicts according to his direction. The government, at last, resolved to resort even to force to make him respect its authority. Accordingly, last fall (1857), a detachment of 2500 men was sent to the Territory to maintain the new governor and his suite.

On this, Young prepared to resist. The troops have already entered Utah, but the severity of the winter arrests them about one hundred and fifty miles from the Mormon capital. The Mormons are not idle. They have surprised a train of seventy-six wagons, pillaged and burned them, carrying off all the animals, horses, mules, and oxen. This loss is estimated at a million of dollars. The troops, ill lodged and ill fed, will suffer terribly if the winter is severe, as it is usually in the elevated parts which they occupy. As soon as the spring opens, large reinforcements will be sent. There is a great diversity of opinion here on the matter. Many think that the war will be long and bloody, and that the Mormons will resist to the death. A great manifestation on the part of the government will, doubtless, be necessary; and I think that as the new forces approach the rebel territory, the Mormons will retire after setting fire to their towns, and march to occupy some new district—Sonora, perhaps, or some other thinly-settled tract in the vast Mexican territory. This fanatical sect will find repose only outside of all other civil jurisdiction. It will master and subject all, unless it is mastered and expelled in season.

One more word on the Mormons and I have done. A new organization has been given to the Mormon troops. In 1840, Smith organized the Nauvoo Legion, and compelled all his disciples from the age of sixteen to fifty to enter it. This little troop has continually increased, and preserves its old name. No effort is spared to render the soldiers perfect in military discipline and exercises. They have at their head officers who served under General Scott in the Mexican war. Young's whole army might, in case of necessity, be brought up to 8000 men. This number would not be formidable, were they not all animated with a spirit of fanaticism which will make them fight, if it comes to that, with an obstinacy like that of the first Mahometans. Besides the community of religion and interest, there exists among them another bond. A great number of them are bound to the President and Prophet Young by horrible oaths. There exists among this people a society called the Mormon Endowment, into which members are admitted amid ceremonies most capable of inspiring superstitious terror. The initiated take an oath of blind obedience, as understood by the secret societies of Europe. The penalty of death awaits him who violates his oath. If the Mormons wish war, as they so loudly proclaim, they will have a chance this year, but they cannot long resist the troops of the United States.

I have the honor to be, Rev. Father,

Your servant in Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XXXIV.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Missions of Kentucky.

Reverend Father:

I inclose a copy of a letter to my nephew, Charles De Smet, advocate at Antwerp.

Dear Charles:

I received your kind letter and read it with inexpressible pleasure and great consolation. I seize my first leisure moments to satisfy your request by giving you some ideas of America, and of Kentucky where I now am, and most of which I have seen.

The United States would be truly the wonder of the world, if the moral state of the country corresponded to the marvellous development of its material resources, to its ever-increasing population, its immense territory, and increasing commerce. Hardly seventy years since, all the country west of the Alleghany mountains, a region now so thickly settled, was but a vast wilderness, traversed here and there by a few feeble Indian tribes, decimated by war and pestilence. On the waters of those rivers which irrigate the whole bosom of the continent, where hundreds of fine large steamers now dash along, full of passengers, loaded with goods, naught was then to be seen but the solitary canoe, cut

from a tree, gliding down the stream, or laboriously stemming its current with its little band of Indian warriors, with eagle or vulture plume, armed with bows or tomahawks. Now, along these waters rise, as if by enchantment, hundreds of cities and towns. On every side cultivated fields, farm-houses, and well-stored barns; on every side, herds of cattle and horses, browsing on the hill-side and the plain, once covered with forests. Railroads and macadamized roads lead to numberless colonies in the interior. English, Irish, German, French, emigrants from every European nation, have come hither in hopes of finding those comforts which they could not hope in their own densely-peopled lands.

It might be supposed that in a country which boasts of unexampled tolerance and liberty, the Catholic Church would be, if not protected, at least spared from persecution. But it is not so. A party, whose only principle is a hostility to the Faith, has several times been formed. Now it flourishes under the name of *Know-nothing*, and it might be termed, "the ignorant and brutal." One of their main objects is, to annihilate, if possible, our holy religion in the United States. It is a secret society, the members of which are bound by horrible oaths. It extends its branches over all parts of the Union. As a general thing, ministers of the different Protestant sects belong to it. Their fury has already been marked by the destruction of Catholic churches in several parts; by insults to priests and religious; by laws passed in several States to seize or control the Catholic Church property, laws which they threaten to pass wherever they attain power.

Kentucky, of which I have promised you a description, evinces a more conservative and really free spirit than most of the other States. Its material prosperity, fertile soil, beautiful sites, natural curiosities, interesting history, make it one of those most favored by nature.

The name *Kentucky*, given to the country by the Indians, signified, according to some, *a dark and bloody ground*, and was so called because in old times it was the battle-field of various tribes in their bloody wars.

Then vast herds of bison, elk, and deer roamed over the plains and prairies, covered with rich, long grass, studded with wild roses. No tribe resided here permanently. Every year, at the hunting-seasons, they came from all the country round to lay in their winter store. Here hostile tribes met: hereditary feuds, envenomed from generation to generation, by reciprocal reprisals, brought on frequent engagements.

In 1769 the celebrated Daniel Boone, whose name seems to indicate a family of Belgian origin, advanced into the *dark and bloody ground*. This courageous man first planted his solitary cabin amid these vast forests, with no aid against the attack of the savages but his forecast, coolness, and bravery. His adventures, which he made known during a trip to the settled parts of the Atlantic, drew around him many families from Maryland and Virginia. They formed two principal colonies, at a distance of fifteen miles apart, and thus became the nucleus of the flourishing State of Kentucky, which now contains over a million of inhabitants.

For several years, till 1797, the settlers were exposed to frequent attacks from the Indians, who surprised their towns, burning and pillaging all that they found in their way. There is now no trace remaining of these hardy lords of the forest: the savage form, his shrill war-whoop, which once spread dismay through every plain and forest, are now as much unknown in Kentucky as in the countries of Europe. The Indians have been exterminated or repelled into the plains beyond the Missouri.

Meanwhile Boone, seeing the numbers of the civilized in-

habitants increasing around him, soon began to perceive that the country was too full, that the population was too dense; he needed a new wilderness, a freer country. He accordingly retired with his family and flocks of domestic animals beyond the Mississippi, in a remote region, where white settlers had not yet penetrated. Here again he found himself struggling alone against wild and uncultivated nature; against numerous hordes of sanguinary warriors, jealous of the encroachments of white settlers.

The State of Kentucky extends on the north along the Ohio over five hundred miles; it is separated from Missouri on the west by the Mississippi, and terminates on the east at the base of the Cumberland Mountains, which separate it from Virginia. The soil produces in abundance wheat, maize, tobacco, hemp, and most of the fruits of your latitudes. It abounds in picturesque sites. There is nothing more agreeable than a steamboat-trip down the Ohio, in the spring, along its banks, now frowning with rocks, now stretching out into green fields of grain, with now wooded hills, where oaks of various kinds, poplar, beech, sycamore, wild vines, chestnut, and hickory, meet, mingle, cross, and interlace their thick branches, presenting the grand and free aspect of unbroken forests. From time to time, amid this noble scenery, which won for the Ohio the name of *la Belle Rivière*, given to it by the early French explorers, new cities rise, as if by enchantment, and spread before you all the fruits of the active civilization of the most commercial cities of Europe.

The eastern part of Kentucky and the banks of the Ohio possess rich mines. Immense strata of white stone, fit for building or making lime, are found some feet below the surface, in almost all parts of the north. Near Lexington, the first city founded in Kentucky, mummies were discovered, re-

sembling, it is said, those of Egypt. North of this city, on the banks of the Blue Lick, great quantities of bones have been found, among the most remarkable being those of the ancient mastodon or mammoth, an enormous animal, of a species now extinct; of the elephant, no longer seen in America; and of a kind of bison, unknown in our days.

Near our college of St. Joseph, at Bardstown, which I visited last April, the surface of the soil is covered with different kinds of petrifactions. There are found in that locality, in abundance, trilobites, terebratula, spirifer, etc. (I use the American geological names), as well as many others. Limestone is very abundant; it belongs generally to the class known in geology as the inferior calcareous of the second formation. It is intermingled with a great quantity of ferruginous particles, and the strata are so thick and colossal that they suffice in building whole cities.

At about sixty-six miles south of the college is the famous cavern, called, from its enormous dimensions, Mammoth Cave. It attracts thousands of visitors, who come from all parts of the United States to witness its wonders. It is, undoubtedly, one of the most extraordinary curiosities in the world, or rather, in the whole subterranean world, with its mountains, its precipices, its rivers, its rugged banks, its enormous domes, which seem like temples built by the hands of nature, and defying art to equal the boldness of its high and immense vaults, suspended without columns. The cavern has many galleries, or alleys, like the catacombs of Rome. Nobody would dare venture in without a guide; he would probably never find the entrance, on account of the countless windings of this natural labyrinth.

A remarkable evenness of temperature prevails in this cavern; the cold of winter scarcely penetrates it, and the heat of summer leaves a mild and moderate atmosphere.

To descend to it, you enter a chamber as sombre as the Tartarus of Virgil. No ray of sunlight enters it. Each bears a torch. This pale light adds to the sublimity of the place, especially when you find a chamber incrusted with stalactites. There the reflection of the torches seems to change the vaults and sides of the cavern into a continuous mass of precious stones. The principal gallery, which is ordinarily followed, leads to a distance of eleven miles under ground. Sometimes it expands, like the corridor of a palace; sometimes the vault descends, so that you have to creep along, and it even forms a narrow passage, called "The fat-man's misery;" elsewhere the passage expands into immense halls, with a vaulted roof three hundred feet high; then soon, stopping before a mountain of broken rock, or opening a precipice, it plunges into new depths, threatening to take you to the very centre of the earth. In these great halls, nature seems to have assumed, for their embellishment, the most fantastic forms, resembling objects of art, fields, vines, trees, statues, pillars, altars, forming as many stalactite sculptures, produced by the action of water, which, filtering for long centuries through the rocks, has formed all these marvellous works. While traversing the great gallery, you pass, at two different times, a deep and rapid river which flows in these parts; its source and mouth are both unknown. It contains white-fish and crabs, varieties of which are found in almost all our rivers, but which are here entirely destitute of eyes, and evidently created to live only in this subterranean river. There is one place where you have to row ten minutes before reaching the opposite shore, because the river follows the course of the gallery and makes it its bed. There is at this point a beautiful vault, perfectly arranged for prolonging and redoubling an echo. The *Magnificat*, chanted by a few voices, had an effect which the most numerous choir and all

the music of a cathedral could not produce, so much does the echo augment the volume and sweeten the harmony of sounds. The sublime silence of this spot, the torches reflected in the subterranean waters, the measured beat of the oars, the idea of a world suspended over your head, and so different from that where you are, all produce an indescribable impression on the soul.

Returning to the entrance of the cavern, you experience in summer an effect like that caused by a sea-voyage when you near the port; although you have been under ground only a part of a single day, you discern the odor of the plants and the flowers at a distance. The impressions produced by these subterranean wonders are so profound, that the sight of the verdure of the fields, the brilliant rays of the sun, the varied plumage of the birds warbling in the trees, impress you with the idea that you are entering a new world.

Let us return to St. Joseph's college. Bardstown, where it is situated, was the first Episcopal See erected west of the Alleghany mountains. Thence Bishop Flaget, the first bishop, governed his immense diocese with so holy a zeal. Now that the see is transferred to Louisville, the cathedral of Bardstown is attached to the college, and has become a parish church. The college has about two hundred pupils, mostly boarders. Bishop Flaget, before his death, had placed it under the direction of the Society of Jesus. Bardstown is a kind of centre of religious houses. On one side you have the Dominican Fathers, at the convent of St. Rose, near Springfield; on the other, the Trappists, who have been for some years at New Haven. There are also several establishments of nuns, Lorettines and Sisters of Charity.

The city forms about the centre of the district, in which

reside the vast majority of the Catholics in the diocese of Louisville. They number about 70,000.

It was also in this neighborhood that, early in this century, the very Rev. Mr. Nerinckx, a Belgian, distinguished himself by his apostolic labors, and left among the people the impress of his zeal and virtues. He founded, in 1812, the congregation of sisters known here under the name of Sisters of Loretto, or Lorettines. It has already spread over different parts of the States of Kentucky and Missouri, Kansas Territory, among the Osage Indians, and to New Mexico.

I must close. Time presses. I have only a few moments to start for Chicago and Milwaukee. Farewell. Do not forget me, dear Charles.

Your devoted uncle,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XXXV.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

The Ursulines of America.

Addressed to the Rev. Mother Superiors of Saventhem and Theldonck.

Brussels, March 21, 1857.

My dear Reverend Mother:

On the point of quitting Belgium, I repass in my memory the benefits which I have received there, and in particular the reception given me in the various religious communities.

Among these asylums of piety and virtue, your academy holds a very high rank. As in America, so in my own land, I have been able to see genuine proofs of the religious spirit which animates the Ursulines, and the great good which they do, and which they are yet called upon to perform, by the fervor of their prayers and by the education of youth.

I congratulate all your community, Reverend Mother, because this spirit proves that God has founded this house and designs to sustain it. I felicitate myself, because I found there consoling subjects of edification, and beautiful examples to narrate to my poor Indians. I congratulate Belgium, where the new Ursulines continue so generously the work of their pious predecessors, to whom so many mothers are inhabted for the sentiments of piety which animate them. I

rejoice with the Church, whose afflicted heart the daughters of St. Angela console, by rendering themselves so worthy of the religious state—one of the most sparkling gems which adorn the brow of the spouse of Christ. Continue then, pious souls, to walk in the footsteps of your Saviour. It is the sole way in which real happiness is found.

I just alluded, Rev. Mother, to the Ursulines of America. I spoke of them to your beloved pupils in my visit with Father Terwecoren. Nevertheless, it may prove agreeable to you to have some more precise information. I need scarcely say that I have no pretension to a complete notice. I must content myself with giving a summary idea of their actual condition and prospects.

The Ursulines were the first religious who established themselves in the northern parts of North America. Before the close of the 17th century, there were in Canada six communities of women, among whom two were of the Ursuline order: the House of Quebec, founded in 1639, and that of Three Rivers, founded in 1697.

In the States of the American Union, New Orleans, capital of Louisiana, was the first of all the cities of the confederacy which obtained a community of Ursulines. This convent was founded in 1727. At the period of this foundation Louisiana belonged to France. It is in this sense that Mr. De Courcy, in his remarkable sketches of the Catholic Church in the United States, observes that till 1790 the United States did not know what a nun is.

In 1730, the community of New Orleans numbered seven Ursulines. Devoted to education and charitable works, they directed a school, an hospital, and an orphanage. The number of their orphans increased greatly at the time of the massacre by the Natchez, which occurred that year. The French expedition delivered from slavery many fatherless

children, and transported them to New Orleans.* "These little girls," writes Father Le Petit on the 12th July, 1730,† "that none of the citizens would adopt, have only augmented the charity and attention of the Ursulines. They have given them a separate hall, and two private mistresses. There is not one of this holy community who is not delighted at having braved the dangers of the sea, were she to do naught else than preserve these children in innocence, and bestow a polite and Christian education on the young French girls, who are in danger of being not much better educated than their slaves. We trust that these holy nuns will shortly occupy the new house destined to their use, and after which they so long sigh. Once settled in it, to the instruction of boarders, orphans, day-scholars, and negresses, they will also add the care of the sick in the hospital, and that of a house of refuge for women of doubtful virtue. Perhaps even, in time, they may be able to receive regularly every year, a number of ladies to make a spiritual retreat, according to the inclination with which we have inspired them.

"In France, so many works of charity and zeal would occupy several communities and several different institutes. But what cannot faith accomplish? These different labors do not astonish seven Ursulines, and they intend to accomplish them, with God's grace, and not permit the religious rule to suffer. Those who, before being acquainted with them, thought that they came too soon, and in too great number, have greatly changed their sentiments and language. Once they witnessed their edifying conduct and the

* The reader will find some account of this in Bishop Spaulding's Life of Bishop Flaget.

† "Lettres Edifiantes."

great services that they render to the colony, they found that they came too late, and that too many could not come if they possessed equal piety and merit."

The following will show what took place at the conclusion of a peace that terminated a melancholy war.* "The Illinois had no other house but ours, during the three weeks that they remained in this city. They charmed us by their piety and by their edifying life. Every evening they recited the rosary in alternate choirs, and heard mass every morning, during which, particularly on Sundays and festivals, they sung different hymns of the Church conformably to the various offices of the day. At the end of the mass they never failed to sing, with all their heart, the prayer for the king. The nuns sang the first Latin couplet in the usual Gregorian notes, and the Illinois continued the rest in the same tone. This spectacle, which was new, attracted many to the church, and inspired a tender devotion. In the course of the day, and after supper, they often sang alone or all together different prayers of the Church, such as the *Dies iræ*, the *Vexilla Regis*, the *Stabat Mater*. It was easy to perceive that they relished singing these devout hymns more than the generality of Indians, and even more than many French their frivolous and often dissolute songs.

"You would be astonished, as I was myself, on arriving at this mission, to see that numbers of our French people are not nearly as well instructed as are these neophytes. They are not ignorant of any of the narratives of the Old and New Testament. They have excellent methods of hearing holy mass, and of receiving the sacraments. Their catechism, with its literal translation by Father Le Boulanger, is a perfect model for those who have need of one in new mis-

* "Lettres Edifiantes." (Amérique.) Paris: 1781. Tom. vii. p. 61.

sions. These good Indians have been left in ignorance of no mystery or duty. What is fundamental and essential in religion, has been explained in a way equally instructive and solid.

"The first day that the Illinois saw the Ursulines, Mamantouensa (chief of the Kaskaskias) perceiving around them a troop of little girls, said: 'I see that you are not religious without an object.'

"He meant that they were not solitaries who labored solely for their own perfection. 'You are,' added he, 'like the Black-gowns, our fathers; you labor for the good of others. Ah! if we had up there two or three of you, our wives and daughters would have more sense, and be better Christians.' 'Well,' said the Mother Superior, 'select those you would like.' 'It is not for me to choose,' answered Mamantouensa, 'but for you who are acquainted with them; the choice should fall on those who are most generous, and who love God the most!' Imagine how delighted those good nuns were, to hear from savage lips sentiments so reasonable and Christian."*

Such were the commencements of the pious Ursuline Community of New Orleans. To these details, I will add a few others, concerning the state of the convents of your order in 1855. In that year the house in New Orleans numbered fifty-two professed religious, three novices, and three postulants. The academy had one hundred and thirty boarders, and twelve half-boarders. In the vicariate of Upper Michigan, at Sault St. Marie, the Ursulines have a school for girls, and they were making preparations to establish a boarding-school destined to the education of girls whose so-

* "Lettres Edifiantes." (Mémoires d'Amérique.) Paris Edition, 1781. Tom. vii. p. 61.

cial position exacts a more finished and a higher course of studies.

In the diocese of Cincinnati, at St. Martin, near Fayetteville, in Ohio, the community of Ursulines consisted of thirty-three professed nuns, nine novices, and four postulants. The boarding-school which they direct, numbers sixty pupils.

In the same State, at Cleveland, the community at the same epoch was composed of fourteen professed religious, ten novices, and four postulants. They direct a boarding-school. This establishment is situated in the most agreeable and healthy portion of the city. Young ladies are there taught the common branches, and the most elevated of a select course of tuition. Boarders, day-boarders, and day-scholars, are admitted. Near Cleveland, four sisters direct an elementary select school and two parish schools.

At Toledo, two of the religious are charged with three elementary select schools and two free schools. At Morrisania, near New York, they have a convent and a boarding-school. In the diocese of Galveston, in Texas, the Ursulines numbered, in 1855, fifteen professed religious; their boarding-school counted from eighty to one hundred pupils. At San Antonio, there were fourteen professed, three novices, and four postulants. The number of pupils varied from one hundred and forty to one hundred and sixty. In the diocese and city of St. Louis, where I have most generally resided since my departure from Europe, the convent of Ursulines is composed of from twenty to twenty-five religious, who direct a school of forty or fifty young ladies. In separate buildings they have a day-school, numbering from one to two hundred.

When reflecting upon all these benefits of our holy religion, spread with a liberal hand over America, we owe a testimony of gratitude to the venerable Bishop Carroll, who

contributed to establish, or prepare, the pious institutions to which is intimately connected the well-being and happiness of these countries.

"At the moment when the Society of Jesus was suppressed by Clement XIV., some Jesuits forsook Great Britain, to withdraw into North America, their country. John Carroll conducted them. Bound to the institute by the profession of four vows, Carroll was not long in winning the esteem of that immortal generation which was silently preparing the enfranchisement of the country. He was the friend of Washington and Franklin, the counsellor of that Carroll, his relation, who contributed in so efficacious a manner to the Constitution of the United States. The forethought and the knowledge of the Jesuit were appreciated by the founders of American liberty. Attached to the Protestant worship, they were about to consecrate its triumph by law; but Catholicity appeared to them, in the Fathers of the Society, so tolerant, and so proper for the civilization of the savages, that they could not to John Carroll refuse to secure the principle of religious independence. Carroll was admitted to discuss the bases with them: he laid them so well, that the liberty of worship has never been violated in the United States. The Americans had pledged themselves to sustain them: they never believed themselves authorized to betray their solemn promise even by the progress that the missionaries elicited in the Roman Faith. When the Union was consolidated, Pope Pius VI., in 1789, gave a guide to all those faithful dispersed in the cities and forests. John Carroll received first the title of Bishop of Baltimore; later he became archbishop and metropolitan of the other dioceses, and apostolical legate, with another Jesuit, Leonard Neale, as coadjutor."*

* "History of the Society of Jesus," by J. Crétineau Joly, t. vi. p. 276.

From this epoch dates, for all North America, the opening of a new era. Bishop Carroll took the initiatory step in a general revival of religion. He had had no models; he will have a multitude of imitators.

"After providing, by the foundation of a college and a seminary, for the education of youth and the recruiting of the clergy, the Bishop of Baltimore occupied himself with introducing into Maryland religious communities of females, who would aid in educating the young, in relieving the sick and needy, and adopting orphans. These good works have ever been the patrimony of the Church, and a Christian community must be considered ephemeral, as long as it has not laid the foundation-stones of convents for the practice of prayer and charity."*

From that time, how many works of salvation have sprung up on the soil of America! how many astonishing traits have betokened the finger of a benign Providence!

Here is one, Reverend Mother, that is very interesting. I told it, I believe, to the Ursuline nuns and pupils of Saven them and Theldonck, but having since read it again in the remarkable work of Mr. Henry de Courcy, "The Catholic Church in the United States," as translated and augmented by Mr. John Gilmary Shea, I can write with more precision.

In 1807, Daniel Barber, a congregational minister of New England, had baptized in his sect Miss Allen, daughter of the celebrated American general, Ethan Allen, so famous in his native State, Vermont. This young lady was then twenty-two.

Soon after she went to Montreal and entered the academy

* H. de Courcy, "Catholic Church in the United States," p. 76; and in "Ami de la Religion," 1855, n. 5872.

of the Sisters of the Congregation. Miss Allen spontaneously embraced the Catholic religion, and wishing to make the supernatural sacrifice of her whole being, she consecrated herself to the things of Heaven in the community of Hospital Sisters of the Hotel-Dieu, where she died piously in 1819, after having by the edification of her last moments converted to the Catholic faith the Protestant physician who attended her.

The conversion of Miss Allen produced other fruits of grace among her coreligionists. Her former pastor, Mr. Barber, became an Episcopalian, but did not stop there in his path to truth; in 1816 he abjured the errors of the pretended Reformation. The son of this converted minister, Virgil Barber, born in 1782, was, like his father, a Protestant minister. He too, convinced of the necessity of being reconciled to the Church of Rome, entered it with his father. Mrs. Virgil Barber followed these examples. These two spouses having become Catholics, did more. With mutual consent they resolved to leave all and separate for the service of God. In this pious view, Mr. Virgil Barber went to Rome in 1817, to obtain of the Supreme Pontiff the necessary permission. He embraced the ecclesiastical state, and was ordained in the eternal city. After remaining two years in Europe, he returned, bringing the authorization for his wife to enter religion. She joined the Visitation order at Georgetown, and for two years performed the duties of the novitiate.

Mr. and Mrs. Barber had five children, four daughters and one son. The last studied at the Jesuit college at Georgetown; the daughters at the Academy of the Visitation, but without knowing that their mother was a novice in the same convent.

After her novitiate, the five children were taken to the

chapel to witness their mother's profession; and at the same time, their father, on the steps of the altar consecrated himself to God in the Society of Jesus. At this touching and unexpected spectacle, the poor children burst into sobs, believing themselves forsaken on earth; but their Heavenly Father watched over this privileged family. He called the four daughters to embrace the religious state three of them became Ursulines; one at Quebec, another at Boston, and the third at Three Rivers; the fourth sister made her profession among the Visitation nuns of Georgetown. Their brother Samuel entered the Society of Jesus.

Father Virgil Barber, after filling with great edification different posts in Pennsylvania and Maryland, became Professor of Hebrew in Georgetown College, and died there March 27, 1847, at the age of 65.

Sister Barber of the Visitation, long resided at Kaskaskia, where she founded a monastery. Sister Mary Barber of St. Benedict, witnessed the destruction of the Ursuline convent at Charlestown, and died at Quebec, May 9th, 1848. Sister Catherine Barber of St. Thomas, followed Bishop Odin to Texas in 1849; of the fourth of these pious daughters I find no detail.

The grace of conversion extended to other members of the family. A nephew and pupil of Father Virgil Barber, William Tyler, born in Protestantism in 1804, at Derby, Vermont, became in 1844 the first Catholic bishop of Hartford, and died in his diocese in 1849.

I close, Reverend Mother, by begging you to accept once more the expression of my lively gratitude for all the assistance that you have given to my mission, as well as for the prayers promised me, not only by the religious, but also by the pupils. I thank them all, and I recommend them to the good remembrances of my poor Indians. May

your daughters in Jesus Christ continue to give themselves devotedly to the holy work of educating the young: God, they will find by happy experience, does not wait for eternity in order to give them an ample recompense! May the dear children continue to profit by these salutary lessons and fascinating examples; they will then retain in the world their engaging piety and their gayety of heart, because they will preserve their precious innocence.

I pray you to thank also in my name your worthy directors, M. Lambertz at Theldonck and Mr. Paeps at Saventhem, who received me with that fraternal cordiality which should reign among priests and religious, called to labor together for the salvation and perfection of souls, and to aim at one sole end, in their works and their aspirations, viz., the greater glory of God.

Accept, Reverend Mother, the homage of my gratitude—and believe me your devoted servant in Christ.

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XXXVI.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Voyage of the Leopold I., from Antwerp to New York.

Reverend Father:

Time absolutely fails me, or I would cheerfully give you long details. I send you a letter that I addressed to the respectable M. M*****, at M. If you deem it worthy of the *Précis Historiques*, please copy it immediately, and dispatch the original. Our voyage was pleasant, and all my companions are well, and have given me great satisfaction. On the 18th I shall set out for St. Louis, &c.

My dear Friend:

To accomplish my promise, I hasten to give the news of our voyage. I am well aware that you will not only be pleased, but that you will expect a letter with a certain impatience.

We have just safely arrived in America, after a delightful and tranquil passage. Embarking at Antwerp on the 21st of April, we reached New York on the 7th of the month of Mary. I send you a sketch of our itinerary.

The eve of our departure, we were invited to dine in the family of the worthy and honored Count Le Grelle, late

Burgomaster of Antwerp, who was desirous of testifying to us on this occasion, as he did on several other departures of missionaries, the deep interest which he takes in our cherished American missions. The day of our departure, he was so kind as to accompany us as far as the port. A great number of other persons, and several of our near and dear relatives also, came to the quay, to bid us a last adieu and wish us a successful voyage.

They weighed anchor between nine and ten in the morning. The weather was superb. The large and beautiful ship, Leopold I., was full of animation. A multitude of emigrants, from Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium, Russia, France, etc., etc., were already on board, and were occupied with an infinity of petty cares and arrangements, in order to render the long passage agreeable, or, as the English say, *comfortable*. The sailors, attentive to the word of command, and every one at his post, were making the latest preparations for setting sail.

We took but a day to reach Southampton, and remained there until the next day, to take in English and Irish passengers. Our number increased then to more than six hundred and twenty persons. During the whole of this day the air resounded with the songs of the Germans and Hollanders, collected on the deck; several parties executed dances, to the sound of the violin and guitar; our main-deck resembled a floating village at the Kermesse (annual fair). But fine things never endure long, and here follows a proof.

Scarcely had we lost sight of the Isle of Wight, than the scene assumed a new aspect. We found the sea in extraordinary agitation. Although the wind was tolerably moderate, and the weather sufficiently fine, the swell shook the ship with such violence, bearing us now on the summit of the highest waves, and then precipitating us into an abyss,

between the turbulent and foaming surges which rose mountain high around us. It was an agitation which succeeded a tempest, or many heavy contradictory winds, which had passed, a short time before, in our neighborhood. That day resembled a genuine day of mourning; the songs and dances ceased; no animation or vivacity was exhibited anywhere; the table was almost deserted; hunger and gayety made their exit together. Here and there might be seen groups of men, women, and children, with sinister faces and haggard eyes, pale and wan as spectres, leaning over the vessel's side, as though making some hasty communication to the sea. Those especially who had revelled most freely, and perhaps looked too deeply into the wine-cup, wore the most melancholy and lengthened faces; they looked absolutely like old parchment—*franzyne gezichten.* Neptune was at his post; this inexorable toll-gatherer exacted the very last portion of his tribute; willingly or unwillingly, it must be paid; and, remark it well, how contradictory the humor of the stern sea-king, for we leave the table after dessert, but he requires the list exactly rendered, from dessert to the initiatory course of soup.

Though this was my eleventh trip across the Atlantic, I was not exempted from the general sea-sickness. I endeavored to resist, but all in vain. I was, therefore, obliged humbly to submit, and share the common misery. The old adage says, "violent sufferings do not last long," hence the indisposed insensibly recovered, and we had no deaths to mourn. We had a worthy and excellent physician on board, M. Themont; he was on his feet night and day, and lavished his cares on all indiscriminately.

This little shadow passed, the remainder of the passage was unclouded. The weather was favorable from that day forward. The winds were sometimes a little contrary, but

the ocean was calm and tranquil, until within six days' distance from New York.

I had the consolation of saying mass every day in my cabin. My young companions frequently received, and several of the emigrants enjoyed the same happy privilege. You would have been edified had you seen our little altar, neatly adorned and surmounted with a pretty little statue of the Blessed Virgin, garlanded with flowers that some ladies from Holland had removed from their bonnets. On Sunday I said mass in the grand saloon, where more than a hundred persons could conveniently find places; several Protestants asked permission to be present. Hymns were sung, during the sacrifice, in French, Latin, Dutch, and German. It was certainly a rare spectacle on the ocean, where one is much more habituated to hearing blasphemies than the praises of God.

On the 2d day of May, when near the Banks of Newfoundland, the sea became covered with a dense fog. It continued thus during four days, so that the captain could not make an observation. We could not distinguish any thing a few feet from the boat. The misfortunes of the *Lyonnais* and of the *Arctic* are still recent. We were in continual danger of coming in contact with some sailing vessel pursuing the same route. As a precaution, the great whistle of the steam-engine was heard day and night, in its loudest and most piercing tones, in order to give the alarm to vessels which might be in our passage. By means of this manœuvre we were able to advance with our ordinary rapidity, ten or twelve knots, or four leagues, an hour.

However, as we were rapidly approaching land, and the fog increasing in intensity, it appeared that we were progressing more or less at random; and as the observations of the meridian had become impossible, we were not without

anxiety. We, therefore, had recourse to Heaven, and we said our beads together, with the Litany of our Blessed Mother, and some special prayers to obtain, by the intercession of the souls in purgatory, a serene sky. Our prayers appear to have been heard. Some hours after, the fogs had vanished, and we had one of the most glorious evenings that can be witnessed at sea. The full moon reflected on the waves, shone in its splendor from the starry and cloudless firmament. The next day the sun rose majestically. We saw a great number of vessels sailing towards every point of the compass. At last, all eyes being turned towards the west, we descried in the distance, above the horizon, as it were, a long train of rising mists. The officers apply the spy-glass and announce that those are the much-desired coasts of America! Songs and exclamations of joy were simultaneously offered by all hearts. The emigrants, grouped upon the upper deck, all saluted the New World, the land of promise, which bore in its bosom all their hopes and all their future prospects. As the objects and shores presented themselves more distinctly to view my young companions could not satisfy their longing eyes at the view of that land, to the salvation of which they came to devote their lives, and on which they will be, I trust, instruments of salvation to thousands of neglected souls. Before the close of that lovely day, the 7th of the month of Mary, we found ourselves, at four o'clock in the afternoon, in the roadstead off Staten Island, in the bay of New York.

One duty remained for us to fulfil. In the name of all the passengers of the first and second cabin, who amounted to more than a hundred persons, I presented to the worthy commandant of the steamship, M. Achille Michel, and to all his officers, a document signed by all, to express our cordial gratitude and sincere thanks for their assiduous attentions,

their great kindness and politeness in regard to all the passengers; and, at the same time, to compliment them for their naval skill in the management of the large and noble ship, *Leopold I.* In all my sea-voyages, I have never met a commandant more capable, and officers more attentive to their charges. The whole crew was well selected and perfectly organized. It is rare to find sailors more tranquil, laborious, and respectful. The names of Messrs. Edward Michel, commander; Justius Wm. Luning, first mate; Louis Delmer, second mate; Julius Nyssens, third mate; Leopold Grosfels, fourth mate; Augustus Themont, surgeon, and Edward Kremer, engineer, will always be dear to us. We also pay a tribute of respectful thanks to Messrs. Posno and Spillaerdts, of Antwerp, for their assiduous attentions to us before embarking, and for all the precautions which they so kindly took to render this long voyage pleasant. Most cheerfully we wish the happiest success to the great and noble enterprise of the "Atlantic Steamship Company of Antwerp."

On arriving in New York, our dear brethren of St. Xavier's College, New York, and of St. John's College, at Fordham, near the city, gave us a most hearty reception, pleased at seeing a new reinforcement to the apostolic work in America. Beautiful and vast America, so superb in all its natural features, is in pressing need of fervent, holy, and zealous missionaries! The thousands of Catholic emigrants who seek a home on her shores from year to year, render her penury, in this respect, more afflicting and melancholy. Ah! may the generous hearts of Catholics in Holland and in Belgium continue to be moved with an increasing compassion for so many thousands of souls, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, who are deprived of pastors and of the consolations of religion. May they not cease sending new troops of

young missionaries, filled with a thirst for the salvation of their neighbor. The harvest is great; the Father of the family only waits for the harvesters. No country in the world has in prospect so magnificent a future. How happy, if she can be induced to acknowledge the true Church, which alone can make us happy here below and secure us a happy eternity, for which we have all been created and redeemed.

Time presses, I must close. Be so kind as to recall me to the kind souvenirs of, etc., etc. Continue to pray for me, and accept my esteem and gratitude for all your deeds of kindness to me; we retain them with unfading gratitude.

I have the honor to be,

Most worthy and respected sir,

Your very humble and ob't serv't,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XXXVII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Rev. Charles Nerinckx,

Pastor of Everberg-Meerbeek and Missionary in America.

University of St. Louis, August 29, 1857.

Rev. and dear Father:

During my last visit to Belgium I heard you express a wish to publish in your *Précis Historiques* a sketch of the life of the venerable and holy missionary, Rev. Charles Nerinckx, the apostle of Kentucky.

One of our best Catholic periodicals, the *Metropolitan*, of Baltimore, has just given a sketch of the Very Rev. Charles Nerinckx. I hasten to send you a copy. In a note, the author of the sketch refers to the *Life of Bishop Flaget*, by Dr. Spalding, the learned bishop of Louisville; the *United States Catholic Miscellany*, vol. v. 1825; the *Catholic Almanac* for 1854, etc.

I propose adding some lines on the same subject, in gratitude to the memory of our zealous and holy countryman, in the thought that they will, perhaps, be agreeable to the readers of the *Précis Historiques*.

University of St. Louis, November, 1857.

Rev. and dear Father:

In your letter of October 20th, acknowledging receipt of the Memoir of Charles Nerinckx, taken from the *Metro-*

politan of July 15th, and the translation, you say that you have already received from me a sketch of the same missionary, published by Bishop Spalding, now bishop of Louisville, in his *Sketches of Kentucky*. I remember, in fact, my sending it. As the Memoir relies on the authority of the same worthy prelate, as the substance of the two notices is the same, and as an old missionary in America had already translated that in the *Sketches*, I think you will do well to publish the latter.*

MEMOIR.

Charles Nerinckx† was born on the 2d of October, 1761, at Herffelingen, a rural commune of the province of Brabant, arrondissement of Brussels. His parents were distinguished for their virtues and their strong attachment to

---

* At all times the Belgians have distingished themselves in the great work of the propagation of the faith. No region so distant that it does not preserve traces of their footsteps; no people, infidel or savage, which does not recall and bless the name of some missionary who quitted his native Belgium. The great St. Francis Xavier admired their virtues and their devotedness. "*Mitte Belgas*" (send me Belgians), was his petition from the depths of India.

How interesting would be a work to retrace the labors of our principal missionaries! But while biographies of other Belgian celebrities abound, we find few of those apostolic men, who expended their sweat and blood in a work which a saint calls the divinest of all divine works.

While this gap remains unfilled we are happy to recall a name well known in Belgium. Charles Nerinckx, one of the most celebrated Belgian missionaries, was, in the beginning of this century, one of the glories of the rising Church of the United States.—*Trans.*

We have some letters of this worthy missionary of Kentucky, which we will publish. Many others must be in existence. Persons communicating them to us will contribute to the good these edifying pieces may do.—*Note of Father Terwecoren.*

† The Nerinckx family is known by the many pious and zealous ecclesiastics it has produced. One of them, early in the present century, repaired to London, where he still directs the Church of St. Aloysius,

religion. His father was a physician of some eminence in the profession; and his mother seems to have been a woman of great piety. The tender mind of Charles was imbued with a deep and abiding religious feeling. At an early age, he was placed in the elementary school at Ninove, where he commenced his studies. At the age of thirteen, he was removed to the college of Geel, in the province of Kempen; whence he was afterwards sent to the university of Louvain, where he entered on the study of philosophy. His parents determined to spare no expense which might be necessary to give him a thorough education; and they were highly gratified to find that Charles corresponded so well with their parental solicitude, and that he more than fulfilled their highest expectations.

Having completed his academic course, and duly consulted God in prayer, the young Charles resolved to study for the Church. Accordingly, in the year 1781, he was sent by his parents to the seminary of Mechlin, where he entered on the study of theology. Here he was still more remarkable for tender and solid piety, than he was for the rapid advancement he made in his studies. Though he far outstripped his companions, yet he did not permit himself to be elated with his success. He referred all his actions to God, to whom he was united by an habitual spirit of prayer. He concealed his success, even from his own eyes, under the garb of a deep internal humility; and from those of his companions, under the veil of an unaffected modesty. He feared the praises of men more than others usually seek them.

---

which he erected, and the orphan asylum annexed to it, also founded by him, and placed under the direction of Sisters called the *Faithful companions of Jesus*. Another religious of the family labors in the toilsome mission of Missouri. The Belgian clergy count several members of the same family.—*Note of Belgian translator.*

His studies completed, he was ordained priest in 1785: and in the following year was appointed *curé*, or pastor, of Mechlin, the archiepiscopal city. He filled this important post for eight years, and gathered there the abundant first-fruits of his ministry. The good people of Mechlin yet remember his piety and laborious zeal, the effects of which they still feel. The rectory of Everberg-Meerbeek, half way between Mechlin and Brussels, having become vacant by the death of the aged incumbent, M. Nerinckx was appointed to fill it, by the general suffrage of a board of examiners, who, after the searching examination, or *concursus*, recommended by the Holy Council of Trent for such cases, unanimously awarded him the palm over all other candidates. Though loth to leave Mechlin, where the people were much attached to him, yet he hesitated not to enter upon the new field of labor thus opened to him by Providence.

The extensive parish of Everberg-Meerbeek was in a neglected and deplorable condition. The parish church was in a dilapidated state, and the people had been much neglected, in consequence of the age and infirmities of his predecessor in his pastoral office. M. Nerinckx immediately set about remedying all these evils; he repaired the church, and was assiduous in his efforts to revive piety among his new parishioners. Believing that the hearts of the parents could be most effectually reached through their children, he spared no pains to instruct the latter, and to rear them up in the most tender sentiments of piety. He gave them catechetical instructions on every Sunday evening after vespers. To do this the more successfully, he divided the parish into sections, and distributed the children into regular classes, which he taught himself, or through pious catechists whom he had selected; and he had the names of all the children of his parish carefully registered. He soon won the hearts of the

children, and was able easily to obtain their regular attendance at catechism. He frequently inculcated on them a tender devotion to the Holy Virgin, and taught them to sing canticles, which he had composed in her honor.

The effects of this discipline were soon discernable. The children were prepared for their first communion, and soon became models of piety for the whole parish. The hearts of the parents were touched; and the most neglectful or obdurate among them, were gradually brought to a sense of duty. Piety was seen to flourish in a parish before distinguished only for its coldness and negligence. Numerous pious confraternities in honor of the Blessed Virgin were established, as well as associations for visiting the sick, and for other charitable objects. Thus, by the zeal of one man, aided by the Divine blessing, a total reformation was effected in a short time; and the parish of Everberg-Meerbeek became a model for all others.

M. Nerinckx, though kind and polite to all, was rather austere in his manners, as well as rigid in his discipline. He was, however, always much more rigid with himself than with others. He never lost a moment, nor allowed himself any recreation. He paid no idle visits for mere pastime; he visited the different families of his parish only on duty, and generally on Sunday evenings. He knew well that a priest who does his duty has little time to spare for idle conversation. Wherever good was to be done, or a soul to be saved, there was he found, by day or by night, in rain or in sunshine, in winter or in summer. When not actually engaged in the ministry, he was always found at home, employed in prayer or in study. He was an enemy of promiscuous dances, and he succeeded in abolishing them throughout his parish.

It was natural that a man of so much zeal, and one who had done so much good, should be viewed with an evil eye

by the infidel leaders of the French revolutionary movement, who had recently taken possession of Belgium. An order for his apprehension was accordingly issued; and M. Nerinckx was compelled to fly from his dear parish, which he left a prey to the devouring wolves. In 1797 he secreted himself in the hospital at Termonde, which was under the charge of twelve or fifteen hospitaller nuns, of whom his aunt was superior. Here he remained for seven years, during all of which time he carried his life in his hands. He acted as chaplain to the hospital, the former incumbent having been banished to the Isle of Rhe. He bore his persecutions with entire resignation to the holy will of God, and edified all by the practice of every virtue. He encouraged the good nuns to persevere in their heavenly calling of mercy. He said mass for them every morning at two o'clock, and then retired to his hiding-place before the dawn.

In his retreat he had full leisure to apply to study, and he lost not a moment of his precious time. He wrote treatises on theology, on Church history, and on canon law; and his manuscripts would have filled eight or ten printed octavo volumes. These he was often afterwards solicited to publish; but his modesty took the alarm, and he was inflexible in his refusal. In the hospital of Termonde were shut up many of the prisoners who had been made in the revolutionary battles fought in Belgium. Some of these were horribly maimed. M. Nerinckx did all he could, in his dangerous situation, to assuage their sufferings, and to impart to them spiritual succor. At the dead hour of night, he often stole to their cells, at imminent hazard of his life, and administered to them the holy sacraments; and when they were hurried to execution, he viewed them from his hiding-place, and imparted to them the last absolution. Often, too, he visited by stealth his dear parish of Everberg-Meerbeek, administering the

sacraments to his people, consoling them in their sufferings, and strengthening them in the hour of danger.

Beset with dangers, and uncertain as to the duration of the dreadful storm which was then sweeping over Europe, M. Nerinckx at length determined to bid adieu to his unhappy country, and to emigrate to the United States. Here "the harvest was great, and the laborers few;" and no impediment was placed in the way of a free exercise of religion, according to each one's conscientious convictions. He accordingly made his escape, in a vessel which sailed from Amsterdam to the United States, on the 14th of August, 1804.

He had a long and dangerous passage of ninety days. The old and rickety vessel was often in imminent danger of foundering at sea; and, to add to the distress, a contagious disorder carried off many of the passengers and crew. Still they were not chastened under the rod of affliction; the heart of M. Nerinckx often bled over their wickedness, which he was wholly unable to check; and he afterwards was in the habit of styling this ill-fated ship "a floating hell." The captain, in particular, was a very profane and wicked man. M. Nerinckx was wont to ascribe his preservation from shipwreck, to a special interposition of Divine Providence.

He reached Baltimore about the middle of November, and immediately offered his services to the Patriarch of the American Church—Bishop Carroll*—for whatever mission

* Bishop Carroll was an illustrious scion of one of the two hundred English Catholic families, who, in 1633, flying from the religious oppression to which they were subjected in their native land, crossed the Atlantic, and settled Maryland, under the guidance of Lord Baltimore. He was a member of the Society of Jesus till the suppression of the order, in 1773. He continued to cultivate that portion of the Lord's vineyard, with his old fellow-religious, till his promotion to the episcopate, in 1789. Pope Pius VI. confided to him the new See of Baltimore, and placed under his jurisdiction the whole extent of the United States.

in the United States he might think proper to assign him. Bishop Carroll received the good exile with open arms, and immediately sent him to Georgetown,* to prepare himself for the American mission, by learning English, with which, as yet, he was wholly unacquainted. M. Nerinckx was then in his forty-fifth year; and yet he applied himself with so much ardor to the study of the English language, as to be able in a few months to speak and write it with considerable facility.

Bishop Carroll was well aware of the forlorn condition of M. Badin,† who was alone in Kentucky, and he determined to send the new missionary to his assistance. And had he sent us no other, Kentucky would still have ample reason to be forever grateful to him for the invaluable treasure he sent in M. Nerinckx.

The good missionary hesitated not a moment to comply with the wish of his new superior. What cared he for the dangers, privations, and labors, which he foresaw he would have to endure on the arduous mission to which he was hastening? Had he not been already trained to this severe discipline of the cross; and had he come to America to rest

---

His death, which occurred in 1815, caused extraordinary grief throughout the country.

* Georgetown College is the oldest Catholic university in the United States, and has been at all times a fruitful hive of missionaries. It is situated on a height, in view of Washington. It has been, since its origin, under the direction of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. This college has acquired new importance by the magnificent observatory erected there some years since, and by the astronomical observations made there.

† The Rev. Mr. Badin, who died recently, after an apostolate of over half a century, was a native of France. He studied at Baltimore, where he was ordained in 1793, by Bishop Carroll. He was the first priest ordained in the United States, where, so shortly before, the Catholics had groaned under the English penal laws.

on a bed of down, and to dally with luxuries? From an early period of his life, labors and sufferings had been his daily bread; and now he was too much accustomed to them any longer to feel any apprehension on their account. He was, on the contrary, rejoiced to enter on a mission which no one else wished, or was indeed willing to accept.

He left Baltimore in the spring of 1805, and, after a long and painful journey, reached Kentucky on the 5th of July following. He immediately applied himself zealously to the labors of the mission, which he cheerfully shared with M. Badin, the vicar-general. For the first seven years he resided with M. Badin, at St. Stephen's; afterwards, he took up his residence chiefly near the church of St. Charles, which he had erected on Hardin's Creek, and named after his patron saint. But he was seldom at home: he lived on his scattered missions, and passed much of his time on horseback.

His labors in the arduous field upon which he had now entered, were as great as their fruit was abundant. With his whole soul, he devoted himself to the work of the ministry. He even seemed to court labors and sufferings for their own sake. Of a powerful frame, and of herculean constitution, he never spared himself. His rest was brief, and his food was generally of the coarsest kind. He generally arose several hours before day, which hours he devoted to prayer and study. In fact, he seemed to be always engaged in mental prayer, no matter how numerous or distracting were his employments.

He appeared to live solely for God and for his neighbor. Performing his duty was his daily bread. And though old age was fast creeping over him, yet he relaxed in nothing his exhausting labors. His soul was still fresh and vigorous; and God so preserved his health, that, even at the age of

sixty, he seemed gifted with all the strength and vigor of youth.

He seldom missed offering up the holy sacrifice daily, no matter what had been his previous fatigues or indisposition. Often was he known to ride twenty-five or thirty miles fasting, in order to be able to say mass. His missionary labors would be almost incredible, were they not still so well remembered by almost all the older Catholics of Kentucky.

His courage was unequalled; he feared no difficulties, and was appalled by no dangers. Through rain and storms; through snows and ice; over roads rendered almost impassible by the mud; over streams swollen by the rains, or frozen by the cold; by day and by night, in winter and in summer, he might be seen traversing all parts of Kentucky in the discharge of his laborious duties. Far from shunning, he seemed even to seek after hardships and dangers.

He crossed wilderness districts, swam rivers, slept in the woods among the wild beasts; and while undergoing all this, he was in the habit of fasting, and of voluntarily mortifying himself in many other ways. His courage and vigor seemed to increase with the labors and privations he had to endure. As his courage, so neither did his cheerfulness ever abandon him. He seldom laughed, or even smiled; but there was withal an air of contentment and cheerfulness about him which greatly qualified the natural austerity of his countenance and manners. He could, like the great Apostle, make himself "all to all, to gain all to Christ." He appeared even more at home in the cabin of the humblest citizen, or in the hut of the poor negro, than in the more pretending mansions of the wealthy.

He was averse to giving trouble to others, especially to the poor. Often, when he arrived at a house in the night, he attended to his own horse, and took a brief repose in the

stable, or in some out-house; and when the inmates of the house arose next morning, they frequently perceived him already up, and saying his office, or making his meditation. He made it an invariable rule never to miss an appointment, whenever it was at all possible to keep it. He often arrived at a distant station early in the morning, after having rode during all of the previous night. On these occasions, he heard confessions, taught catechism, gave instructions, and said mass for the people generally after noon; and he seldom broke his fast until three or four o'clock in the evening.

In swimming rivers, he was often exposed to great danger. Once, in going to visit a sick person, he came to a stream which his companion knew to be impassable. M. Nerinckx took the saddle of his friend—who refused to venture—placed it on his own, and then, remounting the horse, placed himself on his knees on the top of the two saddles, and thus crossed the flood, which flowed over his horse's back. On another occasion, he made a still more narrow escape. He was swept from his horse, which lost its footing and was carried away by the current; and the rider barely saved himself, and reached the other shore, by clinging firmly to the horse's tail.

On one of his missionary tours, he narrowly escaped being devoured by the wolves, which then greatly infested those portions of Kentucky which were not densely settled. While travelling to visit a distant station, in what is now called Grayson county, but what was then an almost unreclaimed wilderness, he lost his way in the night. It was the dead of winter, and the darkness was so great that he could not hope to extricate himself from his painful situation. Meantime, while he was seeking a sheltered place, where he could take some repose, the famished wolves scented him, and came in hundreds, fiercely howling around him. With

great presence of mind, he immediately remounted his horse, knowing that they would scarcely attack him while on horseback. He hallooed at the top of his voice, and temporarily frightened them off; but soon they returned to the charge, and kept him at bay during the whole night. Once or twice they seemed on the point of seizing his horse, and M. Nerinckx made the sign of the cross, and prepared himself for death; but a mysterious Providence watched over him, and he escaped, after sitting his horse the whole night. With the dawn, the wolves disappeared.

As we have said, he was a man of powerful frame and herculean strength. A proof of this will be presented in the following singular adventure, which is well known to all the older Catholics of Kentucky.

He was in the habit of rigidly enforcing order in the church, during the celebration of the divine mysteries. Protestants, and persons of no religion, often attended church, led thither chiefly by curiosity. These sometimes did not conform to the rules of propriety; and M. Nerinckx, who was little swayed by human respect, was not slow to admonish them of their faults in this particular. As he was not very well versed in the English language, and was by nature rather plain and frank, his admonitions were not always well understood, or well received. Once, especially, a man by the name of Hardin—a youth of powerful frame and strength, and somewhat of a bully—took great offence at something which M. Nerinckx had said, and which it seems he had entirely misunderstood. He openly declared that he would be avenged on the priest, the first time that he would meet him alone.

An opportunity soon occurred. M. Nerinckx was going to the church of St. Charles, from St. Stephen's, when Hardin waylaid him on the road. Springing from his hiding-

place, he seized the bridle-reins of M. Nerinckx's horse, and bid him stop, "for that he intended to give him a sound drubbing." At the same time he cut one of the stirrup-leathers, and ordered the rider to dismount—an order which was promptly complied with. M. Nerinckx remonstrated with him; told him that he had meant in nowise to offend or injure him; and that his profession wholly forbade him to wrangle or fight. Hardin, however, persisted, and was in the act of striking the priest, when the latter took hold of him, and quietly laid him on the ground, as though he had been the merest child; observing to him, meantime, with a smile, "that he would neither strike or injure him, but that he felt authorized to see that himself received no injury at his hands." In this position he held him motionless on his back, until he had obtained from him a promise that no further attempt should be made on his person.

After this rencounter, M. Nerinckx quietly remounted his horse, and proceeded on his journey, Hardin as quietly moving off in the other direction. On arriving at the church, one of his friends asked M. Nerinckx, "how it happened that his stirrup-leather had been cut?" He replied, by simply stating the adventure in a few words; and observing, with a smile, "that these young buckskins could not handle a Dutchman!" After this he never was heard to speak of the affair; but Hardin was wont to say to his friends, "he often thought before that he had handled men, but that he really never had hold of one before he met Priest Nerinckx, who, he verily believed, had something supernatural about him."

M. Nerinckx often manifested his great bodily strength in the course of his laborious life. He erected no less than ten churches in Kentucky; two of which—those of Holy Cross and of Lebanon—were of brick, and the rest of hewed

logs. He was not content with directing the labors of others; he was seen intermixing with the workmen, aiding them in cutting timber, in clearing out the undergrowth, and in every other species of hard labor. He generally worked bareheaded under the broiling sun; and, in removing heavy timber, or, as it is commonly called, *rolling logs*, he usually lifted against two or three men of ordinary strength. He built his own house, chiefly with his own hands; and was wont to say cheerfully, "that his palace had cost him just $6.50 in money!"

He had charge of six large congregations, besides a much greater number of stations, scattered over the whole extent of Kentucky. Wherever he could learn that there were a few Catholic settlers, there he established a station, or erected a church. The labor which he thus voluntarily took on himself is almost incredible. To visit all his churches and stations generally required the space of at least six weeks.

He never took any rest or recreation. He seemed always most happy, when most busily engaged. He seldom talked, except on business, or on God, on virtue, or on his missionary duties. On reaching a church or station, his confessional was usually thronged by penitents, from the early dawn until mid-day. Before beginning to hear confessions, he usually said some prayers with the people, and then gave them a solid and familiar instruction on the manner of approaching the holy tribunal. If he seemed austere out of the confessional, he was in it a most kind, patient, and tender father. He spared no time nor pains to instruct his penitents, all of whom, without one exception, were deeply attached to him. To his instructions chiefly, in the confessional, are we to ascribe the piety and regularity of many among the living Catholics in Kentucky.

But it was on the children and servants that he lavished

his labor with the greatest relish. Thoroughly to instruct them, and prepare them for their first communion, was his darling employment. He thought no time nor labor, that was devoted to this favorite object of his heart, too long or ill-spent. For this purpose, he usually remained a week at each of the churches and stations. During this time, he had the children and servants daily assembled, and devoted his whole time to them. He thus renewed in Kentucky the edifying scenes which had been witnessed in his former parish of Everberg-Meerbeek, in Belgium. The children were much attached to him; and he possessed a peculiar tact in winning their hearts, and stimulating them to learn their catechism, and to be virtuous. He distributed them in regular classes, and awarded premiums to the most deserving. Thus he laid, broad and deep, the foundations of Catholic piety in Kentucky.

In Kentucky, also, as in Belgium, he sought to inculcate a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin. The first church which he erected he dedicated to God under her invocation, and called it Holy Mary's, after her. His churches were generally built in the form of a cross: the two arms of which, with one half of the body, were occupied respectively by the men and women, who were always kept separate.

After mass, he was in the habit of practising a devotion, as beautiful as it was touching and impressive. He went to the centre of the church, where, surrounded by the little children, who so dearly loved him, he knelt down, and, with his arms extended in the form of a cross—the children raising also their little arms in the same manner—he recited prayers in honor of the five blessed wounds of our Divine Saviour. The parents often joined the children in this moving devotion. After this, he led his little congregation, composed chiefly of children, into the adjoining graveyard,

where he caused them to visit and pray over the graves of their deceased relatives and friends.

God blessed his labors with fruits so abundant and permanent as to console him for all his toils and privations. He witnessed a flourishing church growing up around him, in what had recently been a wilderness, inhabited only by fierce wild beasts and untamable savages. He saw in the virtues of his scattered flock, a revival of those which had rendered so illustrious the Christians of the first ages of the Church. M. Badin had laid the foundation; and, like a skilful architect, he reared the superstructure, in that portion of the flock intrusted to his charge. The results of his labors prove how much one good man, with the blessing of God, can achieve by his single efforts, prompted by the lofty motive of the divine glory, and directed with simplicity of heart to one noble end.

Yet, though learned and of solid judgment, he was not remarkable for brilliancy of talent, for engaging address, or for pulpit eloquence. His discourses were plain, matter-of-fact instructions, delivered in broken English, and with little rhetorical ornament.

Though he had something austere in his manner, and though he was a foreigner, and spoke English very imperfectly, yet it is remarkable that he made, perhaps, more converts among Protestants, than any other missionary who ever labored in Kentucky, if we except M. Badin. So true is it, that conversion is not ordinarily effected by human eloquence alone, or by any other mere human means, but by the grace and blessing of God, crowning with success the labors of the missionary. M. Nerinckx seldom made a missionary tour without receiving some one into the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church. In one of these excursions, he made no fewer than thirteen converts. And those whom he received

into the Church were well grounded in the faith, and gen erally proved steadfast.

The transcendent merits of M. Nerinckx did not escape the eye of Bishop Carroll. Besides having charge of the whole territory of the United States, this venerable patriarch of the American Church was also administrator of the diocese of New Orleans, which had been for many years without a bishop. On the division of his vast charge into five different dioceses, in 1806, and the erection of his own see into an archbishopric, he recommended to the Holy See the Rev. M. Nerinckx, as a suitable person to take charge of the vacant diocese of New Orleans,* in the character of administrator. The Sovereign Pontiff acceded to his request, and dispatched a brief to that effect. The appointment of M. Nerinckx to this situation was intended as the forerunner of his consecration as bishop of New Orleans.

The good missionary was with M. Badin when he learned the news of his appointment. He meekly bowed his head, and observed to his friend, beginning with the words of the psalmist: "*Bonitatem et disciplinam et scientiam docendus, docere non valeo*"—"Having myself to be taught goodness, and discipline, and knowledge, I am not able to teach these things to others." He mildly, but firmly refused the proffered honor. Desirous of retaining him in Kentucky, where his labors were so fruitful, M. Badin, in conjunction with the Dominican Fathers of St. Rose, petitioned the Holy See that he might not be compelled to accept an office which would tear him from a field of labor in which he had already

* Louisiana, of which New Orleans is the chief city, was sold to the United States, by Napoleon, in 1801. The episcopal see of New Orleans, erected in 1793, was, at the cession, without an incumbent; the first bishop, a Cuban, having been transferred to another see, and his successor having been unable to reach his diocese.

proved so eminently useful. They also represented, that the great delicacy of conscience characteristic of M. Nerinckx, would render him exceedingly unhappy in so arduous a situation, if it would not wholly unfit him for its responsible duties.

The Pontiff yielded to the entreaties of M. Nerinckx, thus supported by the suffrage of his brethren in the ministry; and he did not insist on his accepting the appointment.

Among the establishments made by M. Nerinckx, that of the Sisters of Loretto, or of "the Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross," is the principal, and has proved of the greatest benefit to the diocese of Kentucky. His objects in founding this invaluable sisterhood were: to enable pious females to aspire to the lofty perfection of the religious state, and to promote, through their means, the Christian education of youth of their own sex, especially of those whose parents were needy and too destitute to defray the expenses attending the education of their offspring.

In the course of his long missionary career, M. Nerinckx discovered many young females who sought to practise a more perfect virtue than was compatible with the distractions of the world. They had caught no little of his own spirit of prayer, of disengagement from the world, and of lofty enthusiasm in the path of Christian perfection. He observed, too, many young girls who were raised in ignorance, and greatly exposed to temptation. He devised an admirable means of promoting the spiritual welfare of both these classes of females, in the establishment of the new Sisterhood of Loretto—which name he gave them out of reverence for the famous shrine of the Virgin, at Loretto, in Italy.

The foundation of the new society was laid on the 25th of

April, 1812—nearly a year after the arrival of Bishop Flaget* in Kentucky. The mother establishment was called Loretto, and was erected on Hardin's Creek, near the church of St. Charles. The houses were built of wood, and were very poorly furnished. They were erected on one side of an oblong inclosure, in the centre of which was reared a large wooden cross. The chapel of the sisters occupied a central position in the buildings which stood on either side.

The number of those who attached themselves to the new institute increased every year. Soon the buildings were too small for the number of applicants; and the pious founder was under the necessity of erecting new houses,† and of creating branch establishments of the society. In twelve years from its commencement, the number of Sisters exceeded a hundred; and they had already under their charge six different schools for girls. In the letter above quoted, Bishop

---

* This great bishop arrived in Kentucky, June 11, 1811, and died there, piously, in 1850. Bishop Portier, of Mobile, says of him: "The diocese of Bardstown was the cradle of religion in the West, and its venerable founder, by his long career, may well be styled the patriarch of North America, as his labors and virtues proclaimed him the model of apostolic life.

† According to a letter of M. Nerinckx, dated from Loretto, Ky., September 11, 1818, addressed to the Superior of the Hospital Nuns of Vilvorde, the Sisters of Loretto had then four houses, viz: The Mother house; that of *Olives*, four hundred miles from Loretto, where seven sisters had been sent, at the request of the bishop, to found a house; *Gethsemane*, and *Calvary*. Loretto then contained twenty-two novices and some postulants. During the whole summer they had supported and, in a great measure, clothed eighty or ninety persons, at the expense of the convent, although it possessed no lucrative property and no certain income; the school even, in this respect, was almost unproductive, as the asylum and lower classes paid nothing.

In this letter, M. Nerinckx recalls himself to the kind remembrance of some persons especially of Vilvorde, who had contributed, by alms, to the missions. We may be permitted to cite the names of some of our

Flaget, after having denominated the sisterhood the most valuable legacy which the good M. Nerinckx had left to his diocese, speaks as follows of the condition of the society, in 1824, immediately after the death of the founder:

"Their number is over one hundred; they have charge of six schools. They give education to upwards of two hundred and fifty girls yearly in their houses, and take in some orphans gratis. The missionaries generally send the children whom they wish to prepare for their first communion to these monasteries, whenever they can, and they, as well as the boarders, are admirably well instructed in all that may be useful, both for this world and for eternity."

The assiduous attention to the religious instruction of girls constituted, in fact, the principal utility of the pious society. It is difficult to estimate how much it has, by this means, contributed towards fostering and sustaining piety in this diocese. Within the first ten years of its existence, the Sisterhood had already prepared for their first communion eight hundred young ladies. These afterwards became mothers of families, and were able to instruct others; and thus the good was perpetuated from generation to generation.

M. Nerinckx watched over the new institution with the tender solicitude of a parent. He devoted to the spiritual instruction of the Sisters and of their scholars, all the time he could spare from the heavier duties of his missionary life. He endeavored to infuse into them his own spirit of prayer and

---

own place. They are, the rector and nuns of the order of St. Augustine, the Rev. Messrs. Van Haecht, Van Ophem, Van Hamme and his sisters, Mlle. Van Laethem, and others whom he indicates without naming.

He also mentions a printed letter, which the hospital sisters would soon receive. We do not know this missive of the missionary.—*Note of Father Terwecoren.*

mortification. He labored assiduously, both by word and example, to disengage them entirely from the world, and to train them to the practice of a sublime Christian perfection. He ardently sought to keep alive in their hearts the true spirit of the religious vocation; to make them despise the world, trample on its vanities, and devote themselves wholly to the service of God and of the neighbor, by a faithful compliance with the duties growing out of the three simple vows, of poverty, chastity, and obedience, they had taken.

Especially did he endeavor to impress upon them the obligation of placing implicit reliance upon the good providence of God, not only in their spiritual, but also in all their temporal concerns. A favorite maxim which he had always in his heart, and frequently on his lips, was embodied in this golden saying: "Do not abandon Providence; and he will never abandon you." How could that good heavenly Father, who "clothes the lilies of the field, and feeds the birds of the air," abandon those who had put all their trust in him, and had devoted themselves entirely, both in body and soul, to his service?

In fact, this unbounded confidence in the providence of God, was almost the only legacy he was able to bequeath to the Lorettines. They had, in the commencement of their society, but little of this world's goods to depend upon. It was not difficult for them to practise the poverty which they had vowed; they were already extremely poor and destitute; and in fulfilling their vow, they had but to love and submit cheerfully to that which was a stern necessity of their condition. Their houses were poor and badly furnished; their clothing was of the plainest kind; and their food was of the coarsest.

M. Nerinckx himself set them the example of the poverty and mortification which their institute required them to love,

as well as to practise. According to the testimony of his bishop, "he himself led an extremely austere and mortified life; his dress, his lodging, his food were poor; and he had filled his monasteries with this holy spirit. Those women sought for poverty in every thing—in their monasteries, in the plain simplicity of their chapels. The neatness, the cleanliness, the simplicity of their dwellings, and of their chapels, excited the wonder of their visitors."

To keep up the constant practice and spirit of prayer in their houses, M. Nerinckx inculcated, besides regular and devout attendance at all the pious exercises of the community distributed throughout the day, the utility of raising their hearts to God by a pious aspiration or ejaculation, whenever they would hear the clock strike, or would pass from one occupation to another.

Especially did he enjoin upon them a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, weeping at the foot of the cross, and a frequent repetition of the pious ejaculation: "O suffering Jesus! O sorrowful Mary!" To feed and keep alive the spirit of piety, he recommended to them frequent visits to the holy sacrament of the altar; and we have already seen the provision which he made to keep up the perpetual adoration of Jesus Christ in this, the greatest mystery of his undying love for mankind.

To foster the spirit of humility and mortification, he recommended manual labor, and the love of being employed in the most menial offices of the house. To encourage them to practise these employments with cheerfulness and love, he pointed to the lowly life, and the voluntary hardships and privations of the Blessed Saviour; and to the great utility of such mortifications, for the atonement of sin, and the laying up of abundant merits in heaven.

This austerity was apparent in the body of rules which he

drew up for the guidance of the society. They breathed the purest spirit of Christian perfection; but experience subsequently demonstrated that some of them were too rigid for health, and ill-suited to the nature of the climate. Of this character were, the great exposure of the Sisters to every inconvenience of weather, while laboring hard in the fields, or forests, and the practice of going barefoot during a great portion of the year. As we have said, the poverty of the society at its commencement compelled hard labor; the other practice was adopted, with many others of a similar nature, to cherish a constant spirit of mortification. But these more rigid regulations were retrenched from the rule on its subsequent revision, while its substance and spirit were fully retained.

The heart of the good founder was consoled by the early piety and fervor of the Sisterhood. These appeared to enter into the entire spirit of their state, and to correspond, to the full, with his instructions. According to the testimony of the good Bishop Flaget,* "they were the edification of all who knew them: and their singular piety, and their penitential lives, reminded one of all that we have read of the ancient monasteries of Palestine and of Thebais."

Thus did the good M. Nerinckx, alone and unaided, except by Divine Providence, found a society of pious ladies, which has already done, and will no doubt continue to do, incal-

* Bishop Flaget wrote, in 1834: "The Lorettines were founded in Kentucky by a learned and zealous missionary from Flanders, Mr. Charles Nerinckx, in the second year of my episcopate. The rules of this new community were submitted to the Sovereign Pontiff, who made various changes. His Holiness took this new family under his protection, as I was informed by his eminence, Cardinal Fesch; and what is still more flattering, the Sisters of Loretto, in Kentucky, received from the Pope all the spiritual privileges enjoyed by the chapel of Loretto, in Italy."

culable good to religion in this diocese. M. Nerinckx succeeded in doing what M. Badin had been unable to accomplish. The latter, with intentions and views very similar to those afterwards entertained by the former, had constructed an edifice for a monastery at St. Stephens; but before it could be completed, it was burned down by accident, and thus the whole design was frustrated. It was in the order of Providence, that the exertions of M. Nerinckx should be crowned with better success. His success, in fact, surpassed his own most sanguine expectations. The branches of his institution yearly multiplied, and soon Kentucky was too narrow a field for the exercise of its charity and zeal.

The good founder had been induced to send a colony of the Lorettines to Missouri;* and he had already received gratifying accounts of the success which had there crowned their labors. Though almost exhausted with his missionary toils, and worn down by old age, he yet determined to pay a visit to this distant branch of the society, in order to encourage the Sisters in the path of usefulness on which they had entered.

Another principal motive of his journey to Missouri, was an ardent desire for the conversion and civilization of the Indians, who were there very numerous at that time. He had formed a plan to induce the heads of families and the chiefs of the savage tribes to send their children to the schools of the society, where they might be taught the English language, the elements of learning, and especially the catechism. This he conceived to be the best means of

* There are now four convents of the Sisters of Loretto in Kentucky three in Missouri, one in Nebraska, and one in New Mexico. Rev. D. A. Deparcq, a Belgian, the present director-general, resides at the mother-house of Loretto.—*Belg. Trans.*

reclaiming the Indian tribes; and, in fact, it was but a carrying out of a favorite system, which he had found so eminently successful, both in Europe and in America—that of reaching the parents through the piety of their children.

This was the last journey that the good missionary ever performed. He died in the midst of it, on the 12th of August, 1824, at the house of the Rev. Mr. Dahman, parish priest of St. Genevieve. He breathed his last, while closely engaged in the labors of the mission, and while panting for new means of promoting the glory of God and the salvation of souls. His death was worthy of his life. Calm, patient, collected, and resigned to the will of Heaven; praying to the last, and longing to be freed from the prison of the body, and to be with Christ, the good priest bade farewell to this world, with a confident assurance of a blessed immortality in the next.

The fever of which he died he had contracted in the discharge of his missionary duties. The chief circumstances of his death are so well related by Bishop Flaget, that we will give them in his own words:

"After the arrival of M. Nerinckx at the residence of the Sisters, in Missouri, he wrote to me a most affecting letter, describing the good they had accomplished in that diocese, and the hopes which he entertained of their being one day useful to the Indians. Thence he went to visit an establishment of Flemish Jesuits, which is pretty numerous, and about ninety miles distant from the monastery. After spending some days of edifying fervor in the midst of those holy and beloved countrymen of his, he set out on his return to the monastery, and thence intended coming to Kentucky. Near St. Louis, he had an interview with an Indian chief, who promised to send him a great number of the young females of his tribe, to be educated by the Sisters. He made haste

to carry this news to the monastery, and his heart burned within him, while his imagination pictured to itself the good prospect which lay open to his hopes.

"On his road, however, was a path to a settlement of eight or ten Catholic families, who had not seen a priest during more than two years. Desirous of doing all the good in his power, he assembled them, heard their confessions, gave them instructions, and celebrated for them the holy sacrifice of the mass. He was thus occupied, from a little after day-break, until towards three o'clock in the evening. Seeing the good dispositions of those Catholics, he proposed to them to build a church, in order to encourage priests to come to them; a subscription was immediately opened by those present; out of his own small means he gave ten dollars; and signatures for over nine hundred dollars were instantly affixed to the sheet.

"After all this exertion, in such broiling weather, he felt feverish symptoms. These continued next day, but apparently much diminished. He wished to go to St. Genevieve, which was only fifteen or eighteen miles distant; and though the journey was short, still the exertion and the burning sun greatly increased the fever. The pastor of St. Genevieve (M. Dahman) received him with great kindness and affection. He was obliged to betake himself immediately to bed; the physicians came promptly, and paid him every attention; but to no purpose.

"M. Nerinckx was, I trust, in the eye of God, ripe for heaven; and his Lord saw that it was time to bestow upon his faithful servant the recompense of his labors. He had the use of his reason to the last, and edified all who saw him by his piety and patience. On the ninth day of his sickness, about nine in the morning, he received the holy viaticum and extreme unction, after having made his confession; and

about five in the evening, he breathed out his pure soul to return to its Creator, with entire resignation, and without a struggle. The Lorettines in Missouri requested to have his body, which was accordingly conveyed to their cemetery from St. Genevieve."

The transfer of his remains to this monastery of Bethlehem, Missouri, was made by the direction of Bishop Rosati, who had arrived at St. Genevieve on the morning after the death of the good missionary. He assisted at his funeral service, which was performed with great solemnity.

M. Nerinckx had reached his 63d year; and, during the last forty years of his life, he had labored for the glory of God and the good of his neighbor, with a constancy, an activity, and a zeal, seldom equalled, never, perhaps, surpassed. His whole life had been one continual voluntary martyrdom and holocaust. He contemned this world, and panted only for heaven; but he ardently wished to go to paradise with a numerous escort of souls, whom he had been instrumental in rescuing from perdition, and leading to salvation. This thought seemed to engross his whole mind and soul; and his life was but a carrying of it out. That God, whom he served so long and so faithfully, has no doubt long since crowned these lofty aspirations of his humble and heroic servant.

A little before his death, M. Nerinckx had intended to found also a religious brotherhood, bound together by the ordinary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; and wholly devoted, like the Lorettines, to the service of God and the good of the neighbor. He had even begun this establishment, and had already received into it some members, one of whom, James Vanrissalberghe, accompanied him on his last journey to Missouri, and assisted him in his last illness. But death cut short his design in this respect:

and, deprived of its founder, the brotherhood soon ceased to exist.

In the year 1833, his remains were translated to Kentucky, and deposited in a suitable monument erected at Loretto, the mother-house of the Lorettines. This monument stands in the centre of the conventual graveyard. The base of it is a parallelogram, about six feet long, by three wide. It is built with brick, covered with a plain oak-plank, painted and sanded in imitation of stone, and surmounted by a large urn. On each side of the brick-work is a projecting tablet, on each of which is engraved one of the inscriptions that follow:

"In memory of Rev. Charles Nerinckx, a native of Flanders, who died August 12, 1824, in Missouri. His remains were translated to Kentucky in 1833, by brother Charles Gilbert, at the request of the Loretto Society, and interred at this place by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Flaget, and the Rev. G. I. Chabrat, superior of the Society."

"M. Nerinckx came to Kentucky in 1805, and devoted himself zealously to that laborious mission, during which time he was nominated to the diocese of New Orleans, but he refused that dignity; and in 1812, with the approbation of the Holy See, instituted the Lorettines, or Friends of Mary, and died in performing the visitation of the order, at St. Genevieve, Missouri, aged 63."

One of the end-tablets has "*Requiescat in pace*;" and on the other end-tablet are these words: "Loretto's mite of esteem and veneration for its founder." "Do not forsake Providence, and he will never forsake you. C. N."—this being a favorite saying of his to the nuns, at a time when Providence was almost their only dependence for the next day's dinner.

Such was the life, such the death, and such the establish-

ments, of the Rev. Charles Nerinckx, one of the very best priests who ever labored on the arduous missions of America.*

Letter of the Rev. M. Nerinckx giving an Account of his Vocation.

St. Mary's (Rolling Fork, Ky.), Jan. 23, 1806.

Rev. and dear Friend:

Not to be wanting to our close friendship, nor deserve the reproach of delay, or even of negligence, in a cause as serious as God's honor, the propagation of religion, the salvation of our neighbor and our own, I cannot help writing letter on letter to call with loud cries vigorous laborers to one of the most plenteous harvests, and seek in every direction whatever is needed to labor there. We agreed, when we took our last farewell, to employ all our zeal to succor ourselves our brethren in America, who suffer and die of spiritual hunger; and till that end is obtained, to endeavor to secure the concurrence of men better fitted than ourselves in word and prayer. Let us keep our word. Let us not lose courage, although our first attempts have not answered our expectations. Persuade the good whom you seek; send the generous men whom you may convince. The plan to adopt, and the means to use, were suggested in my letters last year. You have, doubtless, received them. If the

---

* During his stay in Kentucky, Rev. M. Nerinckx made two voyages to Belgium, in 1816 and 1819, to obtain of his generous countrymen aid not to be found in America. Among the young men whom he took over on his last voyage, were several seminarians of Mechlin, most of whom became members of the Society of Jesus in the United States, and continue to labor in the vineyard of the Lord.—*Belg. Trans.*

motives and reasons which induced me myself to undertake this voyage could persuade others to follow, here is some idea of them.

According to the parable in the Gospel, seated, counting my resources, using the most considerations of which I was capable, and repeatedly meditating on my project, I found the following motives for setting out:

1. The danger of my own defection, of being perverted or falling into error, if I remained at home, and the almost utter uselessness of my presence in Belgium in the actual state of things.

2. Certain hope of propagating the honor of God under this severe menace: "Woe to me if I have not preached the Gospel."

3. The tendency of the American people towards the Catholic religion, and the penury of priests.

4. The urgent opportunity of paying my evangelical debt of ten thousand talents. A dignified sinner in my own land, which abounds in advantages, I almost despaired of doing real penance, and making due satisfaction. Hence I concluded that I must undertake inevitable toils and sorrows.

5. The favorable advice of competent persons, without whose council I did not deem it prudent to act.

Such were nearly the principal motives of my resolution, which I confirmed by the following thoughts well suited to spur me on:

First.—A lively ardor of vigorous faith in God, and especially in his ministers. The object of this faith was: 1. The greatness of God and his majesty, and his domain and rights over our ministry, and our duty to serve him everywhere. "I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid. All serve thee; how shall I not serve thee?" and the perfectly incomprehensible honor with which, too, he has deigned to honor

us, by introducing us into the holy of holies, and by ranking us with the princes of his people, which he has certainly not done for us to stand idle. 2. The labors, sweat, and sorrows of Jesus, our master, so worthy of love in all points of view, and of his disciples whose sufferings we have seen. 3. The soldiers of earthly kings serve without choice of country, and are forced to serve for a ration of bread and water; and what trials do they not meet, what kinds of death do they not face without any remuneration? Can it seem equitable, then, for us to shrink from the sweet yoke or service of the Lord, which gives hope of so great a recompense, under any pretext? 4. The sea alarms—but merchants expose to the same and greater dangers their money, their goods, their body, their soul, their families; and when they are broken and extenuated by labors, they still find themselves empty-handed.

Second.—A firm hope of an eternal personal reward, and to be obtained by so many others whom we will perhaps lead back from the ways of error, as also the hope of increasing God's thence resulting glory, and of obtaining seasonable aid from God, our stay and support. The horror of eternal pains, which, according to the judgment already written, await the wicked and slothful servant, and which will torture him.

Third.—The fire, ever burning in the presence of God, the Blessed Virgin, &c. St. Ignatius preferred to live uncertain of his own salvation, and labor for his neighbor's soul, than to die at once with the certainty of being saved. Aided by these and like thoughts, I felt arising in me that fortitude which permitted me to say, when the storms of objections arose: "What I have resolved, I have resolved."

The objections which I successively answered, and my replies, were as follows:

amendment, should leave their country to go to lands white for the harvest, nor will all the good go. If even this happened by a just judgment of God, he is the Master—let him do what is good in his sight; but, meanwhile, what evil hast thou prevented in thy country? what errors hast thou faced? what corruptions hast thou extirpated? what infractions hast thou not consented to? etc., etc. Weep, then, over thyself, and take pity on thy own soul. If apostolic men had remained in their own lands, and they were few enough, we should not have been Christians this day. Should we not, then, pity our brethren?

Fourth objection.—We need means, money, aptitude.

Reply.—As to means and aptitude, the judgment of them must be left to prudent men, who do not belong to the family, and who, although not bound to oblige themselves to the same, are not zealous towards those whom the thing concerns. As to money, God will provide it, my son.

Fifth objection.—Our parents, who need help or consolation, will be afflicted.

Reply.—Remember that the priest belongs to the Lord, and not to his father. Assist your parents as much as you can, and provide for the future; but remember, too, that you must be about your heavenly Father's business. As to the precept of leaving father and mother for God's sake, examine the Scriptures, the acts and lives of the apostles, and the examples of the saints.

You see, then, dear friend, what induced me to undertake this voyage. I have never yet repented coming; and if any one of these motives can be useful to another, I willingly permit him to adopt and confirm it by new and better ones. There are, doubtless, many, stronger and more cogent, which your zeal and serious considerations may suggest. But as those I have set forth suffice for me, who am so ob-

First objection.—You must have a vocation.

Reply.—1. But it need not be confirmed by miracles. 2. I am already a priest, and it is rather late to raise doubts as to my vocation. Better examine a vocation before ordination, than hesitate after being initiated into the holy ministry. It requires as much divine vocation to be a parish priest, with cure of souls in Belgium. Neither advantages, parents, love of home, nor a clinging to one's native soil and house by puerile affection, give surer testimony in the choice of a state of life. We have rarely seen an excuse of non-vocation alleged. When a rich benefice is vacant, no powerful motives are needed to induce most men to accept; but, on the contrary, to prevent them from seizing. So that when you can get an advantageous post, you find a vocation; but when there is question of going to undertake labors elsewhere, vocation is doubtful. Then the vocation is not wanting to him that is called; but here and there, the one called is wanting to his vocation. *Non deest vocato vocatio, sed passim vocationi vocatus.*

Second objection.—The faithful in Belgium also require succor.

Reply.—Only those who wish to need succor, need it; those who do not wish, do not need it. At least, there is certainly more need in America, where there are not two priests to a league, but not even one priest to be found for a hundred leagues at a time, while Catholics multiply; and, moreover, the word sowed produces fruit a hundredfold—that word, now so unpalatable to most Belgians.

Third objection.—The people will perhaps say: If all the good go, what will become of us?

Reply.—Who are you that suffer yourself to be called good? Trust in your vocation, expecting all from God's goodness. Yet neither the wicked, who neglect their serious

tuse, and whose heart is so slow and perverse, I do not see why I should insist further.

I commend myself earnestly to your prayers, your holy sacrifices, and other pious actions, and subscribe myself

Your very devoted servant,

C. Nerinckx,
Missionary in America.

Letter of Archbishop Carroll.

Baltimore, April 1, 1806.

Sir:

Your very estimable friend, Mr. Nerinckx, has sent me, from Kentucky, an account of his apostolic labors, a large package of letters addressed to you, which I have the honor of transmitting by a vessel that is to leave this port to-morrow for Amsterdam. While transmitting them I take a liberty which you will surely pardon me.

From the description given me by Mr. Nerinckx, I am aware of your zeal for the increase of the true religion in the diocese which Providence has confided to me, and of your kindness in interesting yourself to send ecclesiastics whose life and talents will edify the faithful and maintain the faith. Ah! sir, if it were possible for you to find and persuade five or six priests like Mr. Nerinckx, it is incredible how much they would extend in these vast regions the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Although he has but imperfectly acquired our language, still every account from Kentucky already speaks of him as a man who has won the respect, attachment, confidence, and veneration of the whole people. I feel only one anxiety about him; it is, that incessantly engaged in the functions of his apostolate, he will be exhausted by toil.

His friend, Mr. Cuypers, who was to have been his co-

adjutor and consolation, sank under the delicacy of his constitution before commencing his career in the mission which awaited him. I do not know whether it was in his voyage to Amsterdam, or a few days after his landing, that he was attacked with a dysentery. It did not at first seem dangerous. I advised him to go to Georgetown College, the healthiest place in the country, both to recruit and to become more familiar with our language, before starting to join M. Nerinckx. Notwithstanding all possible care, his disease grew worse, and he died a few days before Christmas, in the arms of my coadjutor. You will say with me, that his death, disastrous for my diocese, is only the greatest advantage to him, by advancing the day of his happy entrance into heaven. His piety made a lively impression on all at the college, and served to excite all to the exercises of virtue.

Receive, sir, the assurance of my gratitude, respect, and of my desire to serve you when in my power.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your most ob't serv't,

✠ JOHN, Bishop of Baltimore.

Additional Remarks by Father De Smet.

Mr. Nerinckx was strongly attached to our Society. On every occasion he testified his high esteem for it. He made two voyages to Belgium, in 1817 and 1821, and each time obtained several postulants for the Society—cheerfully complying with the request made by Father Anthony Kohlmann, then Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Maryland, who begged him to obtain, if possible, young men disposed to labor in the American mission.

On his first voyage, Mr. Nerinckx was accompanied back by Mr. Cousin, of the diocese of Ghent, and by four young

men, viz.: James Van de Velde, of Lebeke, near Termonde, professor in the *Petit Seminaire*, of Mechlin; Sannon, from near Turnhout; Verheyen, of Merxplas, who had made the Spanish campaign under Napoleon; and Timmermans, of Turnhout, secretary of the commissary of the district. Christian de Smet, of Marcke, near Audenarde, and Peter de Meyer, of Segelsem, joined this little band of missionaries, in order to enter the Society of Jesus as lay-brothers.

Mr. Cousin died at White Marsh, at the close of his novitiate. Mr. Van de Velde died bishop of Natchez, and I have already given his biography. Father Verheyen, missionary in Maryland, there ceased to live in 1823. His great zeal for the salvation of souls, and his solid virtues, attracted to him the esteem and respect of all who were so happy as to know him. Father Timmermans, socius of Father Van Quickenborne, finished his career at St. Stanislaus, Missouri, in 1824. He was an indefatigable missionary, and one who rendered great service to religion in those districts. Brother Christian de Smet died at the college of Georgetown, D. C., after having been a model of a true and holy religious during the years that he passed in the Society. Brother Pierre de Meyer is the sole survivor of the party. I obtained from Mr. Nerinckx some quite interesting particulars concerning their long and dangerous voyage, which are still fresh in the memory of our good Brother Pierre.

They embarked on the 16th of May, at the island of Texel, Holland, on the brig *Mars*, Captain Hall, of Baltimore. The voyage was long and dangerous. Scarcely had they entered the English Channel than a storm suprised them, and threatened to submerge them. One of the sailors, precipitated from the topmast into the sea, was lost. Universal fear and consternation reigned on board. It was Whit-Sunday. During three days the vessel, without sails and with

out a helm, beaten by the winds and waves, floated about at the mercy of the ocean.

In another tempest the ship sprung a leak,—large, and deemed irreparable. During more than three weeks all the pumps were in action, without interruption, night or day, and all, passengers and crew, even the venerable missionaries, were obliged to work. Happily there were on board about a hundred emigrants, Swiss and Germans. Without their aid it would have been impossible to save the brig. When approaching the Banks of Newfoundland the *Mars* fell in with a piratical vessel, which gave her chase and succeeded in boarding her, after a long pursuit. The captain of the pirates, named Moony, was a native of Baltimore. Far from manifesting hostile intentions, he appeared full of joy at meeting a countryman. As the *Mars* was failing in provisions, Captain Hall bought several barrels of biscuit, salt beef, some tuns of fresh water, and a great quantity of dried fruits and wine, which the pirate had in abundance, having plundered, three days before, a Spanish merchant-ship, on its way to Spain.

Neither the captain nor the mate of the *Mars* was qualified for his post. Their calculations always varied. After passing the Azores, they steered straight for the tropics. Then finding themselves too far south, they turned towards the Banks of Newfoundland. Sailing thus at random, the vessel, one fine morning, was on the point of striking on the dangerous shore of northern Long Island. At last, after a voyage of sixty-six days, they made Chesapeake Bay, July 26th, and on the 28th reached Baltimore in safety.

In 1821, the Very Rev. M. Nerinckx once more visited his native country, in order to obtain spiritual succor necessary to his numerous missions in Kentucky. On this occasion the Father Provincial of Maryland again renewed with earn-

estness his request to conduct hither a good reinforcement of young Belgian missionaries.

During the sojourn of the zealous missionary in Belgium, some professors and students in the Lesser Seminary of Mechlin conceived the idea and formed the intention of entering into the Society of Jesus, to devote themselves to the salvation of souls in the United States. They soon had an opportunity of realizing their noble design. The Very Rev. M. Nerinckx appeared in their midst. The picture which he drew of the abandoned state of the poor Catholics in these immense countries, in which, for want of priests, thousands forget or forsake the Faith, excited their fervent sympathy and zeal. He spoke to them at length of Kentucky, where the Lord had wrought so many wonders by his ministry, and painted to them in living colors the absolute abandonment in which the Indian tribes of the Great Desert roamed, to the conversion of whom the Sons of St. Ignatius had, at all times, devoted themselves. The young candidates at once presented themselves to the respectable missionary, resolved, if he would consent, to accompany him to America. This consent was easily obtained, and he received them with open arms. They afterwards were forced to overcome numerous and great obstacles which opposed their departure, arising from their parents and the government of Holland.

The following are the names of these young candidates who presented themselves to the Rev. M. Nerinckx, to enter the Society of Jesus, in America. I commence with the eldest: Messrs. Felix Verreydt, of Diest; Josse Van Assche, of St. Amand; Peter Joseph Verhaegen, of Haecht; John Baptist Smedts, of Rotslaer; John Anthony Elet, of St. Amand; Peter John de Smet, of Termonde.*

* Father Elet and Father Smedts are dead, and sketches of them will be found in this volume.

It was agreed with M. Nerinckx that his six companions should meet in Amsterdam, in order to make all the preparations necessary for the long voyage over the Atlantic, and also to make ulterior arrangements for eluding the vigilance of government, which had given the authorities strict and severe orders to arrest them. They succeeded in gaining the rendezvous. On the 26th of July, 1821, they arrived at Amsterdam. On the 31st of the month, the Feast of St. Ignatius, they quitted the city and embarked in a little boat, in order to repair to the island of Texel, in the Zuyder-Zee. The following day they stopped at Wieringen, where they visited a Catholic church, and, some hours after, they landed at Texel and took lodging in a Catholic house that some friends in Amsterdam had prepared for them beforehand. At length, on the 15th of August, they got on board the brig *Columbia*, after having gained the open sea in a little pilot-boat, which had passed the Helder without being observed by the police. The voyage, therefore, commenced under the auspices of our Holy Mother, on the day of her glorious assumption into heaven. We experienced, it is true, some storms and some heavy gales of wind; but all passed without the least unfortunate incident.

At the end of forty days we disembarked in the beautiful city of Philadelphia. The next day we exchanged *adieux* with the venerable and worthy M. Nerinckx, a man eminent for sanctity and learning, and full of zeal for the salvation of souls, justly deserving to be styled one of the principal apostles of the American Church, as the author of the biography which I have recapitulated in this letter has so well displayed him. We quitted him, filled with reverence and respect for his person. The sage counsels which he unceasingly gave us, and the example of his eminent virtues that we had beneath our eyes during the forty days' passage, have

ever remained present to the memory of his companions. We enjoyed the distinguished favor of possessing him some time at the novitiate of St. Stanislaus, Missouri, a few days before his death.

In union with your holy sacrifices and prayers, I have the honor to be,

Reverend Father,

Your devoted servant,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XXXVIII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Charles Felix Van Quickenborne.

New York, May 16, 1857.

Rev. and dear Father:

This notice of the Rev. Charles Van Quickenborne has been based on a sketch of his life, in the archives of the vice-province of Missouri, and I have inserted some facts from my own knowledge.

Father Charles Felix Van Quickenborne was the first Jesuit who appeared in the great valley of the Mississippi after the re-establishment of the Society of Jesus. He was a man full of zeal for the salvation of souls. The conversion of the Indians was, in particular, the object of his predilection and of his prayers. Long will his name be held in benediction, and his memory celebrated in the places which had the happiness of receiving the fruits of his numerous labors and of his truly apostolic virtues.

He was born in the diocese of Ghent, at Peteghem, near Deynze, on the 21st of January, 1788. Having commenced his studies at Deynze, he went to Ghent to complete them, and there he embraced the ecclesiastical state. Van Quickenborne constantly distinguished himself by his talents and his application. Ordained priest, he was sent to Roulers, to teach *belles lettres*. He remained there four years; that is to say, until the moment that the ecclesiastical seminary was closed. A short time after his return to Ghent he was sen

as vicar into a parish where he had the singular happiness, as he frequently said with pleasure, of finding Mr. Corselis as Dean. The friendship and the distinguished virtue of this venerated priest exerted a very salutary influence over the mind of the young vicar, and made an impression which was never obliterated.

About this time the Society of Jesus, in the expectation of its approaching re-establishment, had prepared a novitiate at Rumbeke, near Roulers. There, yielding to the impulse of his zeal, Van Quickenborne presented himself, on the 14th of April, 1815. From that moment he sighed for the mission of America.

Scarcely had he finished his novitiate than he obtained from Father Thaddeus Brzozowski, then general, the permission to consecrate himself entirely to the desired mission. He embarked at Amsterdam. After a navigation fraught with perils, he had the happiness of reaching America, near the close of the year 1817.

At the opening of the year 1819 he was placed at the head of the novitiate of Maryland, at White Marsh. He displayed, in this responsible position, all the means which it furnished him for the salvation of souls. Superior and master of novices, he became, at the same time, farmer, carpenter, and mason. He erected a handsome stone church on the novitiate grounds, and built a brick one at Annapolis. At the same time he attended, as a missionary, a vast district, which, during several years, he was to evangelize alone, before a companion could second his charitable toil.

His labors were precious for Maryland; but the poverty of that mission was extreme. This led the Rt. Rev. Wm. du Bourg, bishop of both Louisianas, to request that the novitiate be transferred to Missouri. The superior of the mission consented to it. Father Van Quickenborne, therefore, set

out with two Fathers, seven scholastic novices, and three coadjutor brothers. After a journey of 1600 miles, amid the heat of summer, with continual fatigues and privations, he arrived near Florissant, where he commenced the novitiate of Saint Stanislaus. To form this new establishment, he found no other materials than those he drew himself from the forests and the rocky bed of the river. But his ardor for labor was daunted by no difficulty; his inflexible courage was not to be arrested by any obstacle. He was always the first at work. He seemed to multiply himself, going from one workman to another, exciting and encouraging every one by his example far more than by his words. Endowed with an admirable patience, and with a great spirit of mortification, he was never exacting to any one but himself, listened only to the enthusiasm which inspired him to spend himself without reserve, and never knew what it was to spare his own health or strength. He was near becoming a victim to this self-forgetfulness. One day he was working at the squaring of a timber, aided in this labor by a young novice. The latter, not yet versed in the work, used his axe with an eagerness of which he was far from imagining the consequences. Right glad to perceive the wood yielding under his blows, he only thought of multiplying them. One of them, ill-directed, struck the Father on the foot. Notwithstanding this wound, and the loss of blood, the Father did not give up his labor until he found himself fainting, then only would he take a seat and allow the cut to be bound up with a handkerchief. The laborers, meanwhile, were three miles from the farm, which served them as a common residence. The Father endeavored to return there on foot; but, on the way, the pain arising from the wound became so violent that he was constrained to yield and suffer himself to be put on the horse that had been sent for him. A burning

fever obliged him to keep his bed for several days. As soon as he became a little better he desired to return to his work, but he must use the horse. Thence arose a new accident. The shores of the river are swampy in certain places; the horse sunk into one of these mires; the Father needed all his calm and coolness to regain the solid ground; but all the efforts that he made to extricate his poor animal proved useless; he was obliged to see him perish. These accidents, instead of shaking his constancy, had the effect of rendering him more firmly determined to accomplish his purposes. It was surrounded by difficulties, which would have appeared insurmountable to a courage less heroic, that he constructed the novitiate of Florissant, aided by his Belgian novices. In 1828 he undertook the construction of a university at St. Louis. He also built, at St. Charles, a stone church and a convent for the religious of the Sacred Heart, as well as a residence. These toilsome undertakings, and all the manifold cares arising from them, seemed but to freshen his activity: he only finished one enterprise to begin a new one.

Florissant and St. Charles became so many rallying-points around which little colonies of Catholics and Protestants formed and multiplied. The missionaries went in every direction to afford spiritual aid for so many abandoned souls, too often more destitute of the riches of grace than of those of earth. Father Van Quickenborne devoted himself to these apostolic courses with real gladness of heart; his consuming zeal found the sweetest consolation in the conversions which he effected. The Protestants testified the greatest respect towards him, although then (in 1824, 1825, etc.), as at present, their ministers spared no means to fetter his proceedings and arrest the effects of his zeal. They depicted our religion as an assemblage of absurd and contemptible doctrines; they drew the most revolting portrait of the mission-

ary. Among certain of the lower classes, they even went so far as to make him a monster with cloven feet, horns on his head, and armed with claws. Hence, when the Father appeared among them for the first time, these poor people flocked around, scanned him attentively from head to foot, and finding him like other men, they immediately listened to him, and were converted without the least difficulty.

In one of his rides, there happened to him one of those singular facts in which he recognized more particularly the action of divine Providence. Arrived at a place where the road branched, he intended taking the more beaten road, but his horse resisted. In vain he urged him to obey; the animal prevailed over the missionary, and darted rapidly into the other and less agreeable way. The route crossed a forest. Night came on, and he found himself obliged to stop at a little cottage, as poor as solitary, and, as it were, lost by its little dimensions in the towering wood. The Father met with a cold reception. As they perceived that he was a missionary priest a great reserve was maintained. Supper was indeed served for him, but they spoke with him in a timid and embarrassed manner. He understood the cause. In a corner of the room lay a child sick with a fever, and in extremities. The missionary asked the distracted mother whether her boy had received baptism. On being answered in the negative, he began to explain the necessity of this sacrament. "God himself sent me here," added he, "to open to your child the portals of heaven; you must hasten, for soon he will be no more!" The mother replied disdainfully, that she would never suffer a priest to baptize her son; that she did not believe in baptism. It was in vain to insist. As the child was consumed with thirst the Father, feigning to renounce his first idea, very kindly attempted to relieve it from time to time, by giving it a little water, and at a

moment when the mother, occupied with other things, turned her attention elsewhere, he baptized the child, who soared to heaven a few moments after.

A short time after this, passing near the same cottage, the Father called again and asked to see the mother of the child. This time he found her affable and obliging. She evinced a very great desire to have some information concerning the Catholic religion. Soon she avowed that all she had heard on the necessity of baptism troubled her, and that she deplored it as a misfortune that she had deprived her son of so great a grace. "Console yourself," said the kind Father, "your son received baptism, and he now enjoys the beatific vision. He now intercedes for you with God. Receive baptism, and you will one day share his happiness." These words produced the desired effect. The woman was converted, and, with her whole family, received baptism. Such were the blessed consequences of the obstinacy of the horse. Strangely enough, on the day after, he followed the other road without any show of resistance.

The salvation of souls was, with this apostolic man, an ever-present thought, desire, and necessity. He had also a wonderful art in seizing occasions and profiting by circumstances. He understood also, by his conversations and narratives, how to communicate to others the zeal with which he was inflamed. They were captivated, so that those who could not assist him by their labors, pledged themselves, at least, to assist him by their prayers. Thus, in order to engage his novices to pray with ardor, he granted them a little feast each time that the conversions attained a certain number.

The Protestants, we have already observed, made efforts to throw obstacles in the path of the man of God, but he had to struggle especially with the Methodists. One day

he gave a severe blow to the influence of these noisy sectarians. Being on a mission, he heard that they were to hold a meeting in a place named to him. For a long time he had sought an occasion of coming in contact with them. He, therefore, set out for the appointed locality, and endeavored to attract there all the Protestants that he could find. The Methodists were holding their meeting in the church. The Father, on his arrival, found an immense concourse. His religious habit and his venerable air, at first excited a profound astonishment in men, most of whom saw a priest for the first time. In their amazement, several cried out: "What does that queer man want?" The Father answered modestly, that he was desirous of hearing from their mouths some explanations on certain important points which concern religion, and begged they would allow him to propose a few questions. Then, profiting by the consent which they gave him, he began to interrogate them on the essential points that distinguish the true from the erroneous doctrines. The ministers wish to reply, but no two answer in the same manner. They refute themselves, and contradict each other. The Father insists; they disagree. The confusion only increases, to the great scandal of the auditors, who thus have an evidence that those ministers, so habituated to despise the priests in their absence, are incapable of replying to them when they meet them. The Father left these men disputing (to their shame and confusion), and went to make a discourse in the open air on the unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity of the Roman Catholic Church, which all sects and all their ministers united can never shake. Such astonishing boldness, the talents of the preacher, and the solidity of his reasonings, conciliated the attention and respect of all. He had gained a signal victory over the ministers of falsehood and calumny. During

a long period, their discourses had no echo in that place. Every time that the Father returned there, they opened the hotel of the town to him, that he might celebrate mass and preach. His sermons, every time, produced numerous conversions.

On entering the apostolical career, Father Van Quickenborne enjoyed a robust health; but the severe labors and incessant hardships of the apostolate undermined his strength. However, his infirmities never cooled the ardor of his zeal. His charity and his confidence in God seemed to supply the weakness of nature, and God, more than once, seconded his efforts in a marvellous manner. One day, while he was retained in his bed by a severe, and even serious malady, they came to tell him that a poor Catholic, dying, a hundred miles off, implored the comforts of religion. To the amazement of all, he caused a cart to be prepared, ordered his mattress to be laid in it, and taking with him the Blessed Sacrament and the oils he set forth, after giving to them all his blessing. All received it, as though it would be the last. They followed their kind Father with fears and regrets. After a few days he reappeared among them quite triumphant; he had administered to the sick man, and was himself perfectly cured.

His apostolical zeal inclined him above all to those places in which he saw more spiritual privation and more neglect. He ardently desired to go and evangelize the poor Indians, wandering in the wilderness. He made several excursions among the Osages and the Iowas, and each time the most precious fruits met his expectation. In 1836, he succeeded, by soliciting, in collecting some money in the different States. He at once commenced a fixed residence among the Kickapoos; already he had built a house and chapel. He had visited the neighboring tribes, and formed the

most extensive and solid designs for their conversion, when he was suddenly arrested in the midst of his enterprises. The Superior of the Missions in Missouri, on paying the visit to his missionaries, found the Father so feeble in health that he judged him incapable of continuing his labors. As soon as the Superior returned to St. Louis he re called him.

Faithful to the voice of obedience, Father Van Quicken borne quitted his cherished mission. He reappeared at St. Louis with a cheerful countenance, reposed there some days, went to make his annual retreat at the novitiate, and then set out for St. Charles, so as to go thence to the little parish of St. Francis in the Portage des Sioux. There, he was to lead a quiet life, assisted by one coadjutor brother, and only bestowing his cares on this little flock. But is there any hope of limiting his zealous efforts? He set himself at once to build a church in the neighborhood, and he was desirous of converting a certain number of Protestant families. These labors were absorbing his whole attention, when he was attacked by a bilious fever which carried him off in some days, resisting all the cares of an experienced physician.

Father Pallaison assisted him in the hour of death. The man of God was calm until the end, and filled with devout resignation. He received the last sacraments with a deep and touching piety, and saw death approaching without fear. About twenty minutes before expiring, perceiving his last moment, "Pray for me," said he to the Father and Brother who were near him. These were his last words. He expired without agony. His death took place on the 17th of August, 1857. His body, followed by crowds, was borne to St. Charles, and interred with much pomp in the middle of the graveyard, at the foot of the cross. Catholics

and Protestants assisted at his funeral, for he was beloved by all.

The lengthened labors of this apostolic man, and the churches which he built, suffice to perpetuate his memory, were it not already deeply engraven in the hearts of all who knew him.

Accept, etc.,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XXXIX.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Theodore de Theux.

New York, May 16, 1857.

Rev. and very dear Father:

In several of your letters you requested me to give you some notes concerning the life and character of Father de Theux, of saintly memory. Will you be so kind as to add the information which follows to what I have already sent, and blend them, in form of a biography, in one letter?

John-Theodore-Mary-Joseph de Theux was born at Liége, on the 25th of January, 1789. His parents, not less distinguished by their piety than by their birth, endeavored to inspire their children betimes with the love and fear of God, and to form them to the practice of all the virtues, as do those rare families in which faith is hereditary.

Theodore had not yet terminated his study of the humanities, when he felt a strong conviction that God called him to the ecclesiastical state. Having finished them, he entered the seminary of Namur in 1808. Devoting himself with untiring application to the study of philosophy, he distinguished himself as much by his success as by his regularity of conduct, his piety, and gentleness. At the end of the course he won the first prize for the collective examinations, which lasted several days. He showed, in every circumstance, a great soundness of judgment. His success in his

theological studies, Holy Scripture, canon-law, and other ecclesiastical sciences was equally brilliant.

His former companions preserve a most delightful recollection of the relations of young De Theux with his class-mates, whom he assisted with his lights and counsels. The amenity of his temper gained him every heart; it reflected his soul, which was inflamed with the fire of heavenly charity. He passed four or five years in the seminary of Namur.

He received the tonsure in March, 1810; minor orders in the month of June following; the sub-deaconship, the 21st of December, 1811; the deaconship, the 22d of February, 1812. Admitted to the priesthood the 21st of June following, feast of the angelical Saint Aloysius, the Abbé de Theux, before the end of the same year, had a fine opportunity of displaying the zeal which he never ceased exciting in his heart. He was named vicar of the parish of St. Nicholas at Liége.

It was the epoch when the imperial government, in the height of its combat with all Europe, multiplied beyond measure the prisons of State; and while the faithful cardinals mourned in the strongholds of Piedmont and France, the generous defenders of Spain expiated at Liége the fault of having fought for the liberty of their unhappy country. The greater number of them languished in the hospitals. In order to be able to offer them the consolations of the Church, the new vicar of Saint Nicholas occupied himself wholly with the study of the Spanish language, and, with the help of God, in a short time, he was able to hear the confessions of the imprisoned. It was very beautiful to see this young priest, a member of one of the first families of Liége, braving, at the pillow of the dying, the pestilential influences of the epidemic which raged among the prisoners, particularly at the hospital of St. Laurent. Attacked by the disease, the Abbé de Theux was received into the bosom of

his family. God, in order to try him, permitted that the malady should be communicated to several of his near relatives, and prove the cause of death to one of his brothers. Theodore, however, escaped death. God, who had great designs over him, would not allow that he should so soon become the victim of his zeal.

In 1815, named by M. Barrett, administrator of the Episcopal See of Liége, Professor of Dogmatic Theology and of Holy Scripture, he presided at the opening of the seminary and gave the first course of theology. At this epoch there was only one class in the seminary of Liége. In the exercise of his new functions he conciliated the love and respect of his pupils, as well by his zeal and his devotedness, as by his tender and paternal solicitude. But his love for God and his neighbor demanded labors more painful, sacrifices of a nobler grade. He embraced, with as much eagerness as happiness, the occasion that Providence offered him.

The Abbé Charles Nerinckx, one of the first and most efficient missionaries of Kentucky, after a voyage to Rome, visited once more the land of his nativity, Belgium. The picture that he presented of the disastrous state of the missions of the United States touched the compassionate heart of the Abbé de Theux. After assuring himself, by fervent prayers and other meritorious works, that such was the good pleasure of God, he resolved to quit his native land, to renounce the intercourse of a tenderly-loved family, to bid farewell to numerous and sincere friends, and go into a strange land to labor for the salvation of souls and spend the rest of his days.

He left Antwerp for America on the 15th of April, 1816, with one companion, who, like himself, was desirous of being enrolled among the followers of St. Ignatius. The two travellers arrived safely. On the 7th of August, they were ad-

mitted to the novitiate of White Marsh, Prince George's Co., Md. Father de Theux took his first vows on the 18th of August, 1818.

Being the eldest son, Theodore would have inherited his father's title. He renounced it in favor of his brother Bartholomew, at present Count de Theux de Meylandt, former minister of Belgium, member of the Chamber of Representatives, minister of State, etc.

The fervor of the priest only augmented in the religious. All those of his brethren who have had an opportunity of seeing him and conversing with him, are unanimous in testifying to his distinguished virtue, singular piety, and the rare prudence of his zeal. For several years previous to my departure for the Indian missions, I had the happiness of being his room-mate, in a little wooden cabin. At his express petition, I served him as admonitor. He made an agreement with me that he should present himself to me twice each week, to ask of me the faults and defects that I might have remarked in him. He besought me with earnestness and humility not to spare him; to have no favorable consideration for him; to warn him openly and frankly of the least thing that I might discover in him reprehensible. At the same time he promised me the deepest gratitude, and assured me that he would often pray for me. In vain I observed him closely in the accomplishment of his spiritual duties in his classes of theology, at table, in recreation, so as to prove to him my desire to oblige him. I often made efforts to surprise him in some fault, but never, that I know, was I able to find him deficient. As I discovered that he seemed to be disappointed because I did not correct him, so as to tranquillize him I had recourse to trifles—to the merest bagatelles. The more I told him the more he thanked me, and the more also, undoubtedly, he prayed for me. He united

in himself the simplicity of a child with the humility of a great saint. While I occupied the same apartment with him, I ever remarked that he was scrupulously punctual to every duty, whether spiritual or otherwise, and each had its appointed hour. Every day he studied the sacred Scriptures. He read over his breviary with a profound recollection, kneeling before his crucifix or at the foot of the altar, before the Blessed Sacrament.

These exercises of piety, and the unceasing labors of the missions, perfected this beautiful soul, and Father de Theux was admitted to his solemn profession on the 15th of August, 1829. From the second year of his novitiate he had been named Operarius (that is to say, charged with exercising the holy ministry in the church of the Holy Trinity). His great zeal and his exemplary piety, won him the respect and the confidence of all intrusted to his care. Hence, when he was obliged to leave this church for Missouri, there was a general regret.

From 1822, different localities became successively the scene of the apostolical works of this holy religious. He was professor of theology, superior of the missions, master of novices in Louisiana at Grand Coteau, at St. Charles in Missouri, and at Cincinnati in Ohio. Everywhere he gave proofs of an indefatigable zeal, of an unlimited devotedness. Everywhere he gained the esteem and affection of his brethren, and of all those with whom he was called to treat, whether Catholic or Protestant. Everywhere he left the ineffaceable remembrance of his virtues, and the regret caused at his departure. It was in the exercise of his apostolical functions that he contracted the germ of the malady of which he died.

When he resided at Grand Coteau, Louisiana, going one day to visit a sick person, he passed through a place called

Lafayette. A young Frenchman who was amusing himself boisterously in an inn, drinking and laughing with several boon companions, saw the Father passing by, and pointing him out with his finger, he took his cane and shouted that he was going to show them how to treat that "*canaille de prêtres!*" "I'll make this Jesuit quake under my blows," said he, and he came out to put his intention into execution. The braggadocio accosted the Father with curses and insulting language, and asked him with effrontery on what part of his person he would prefer to receive the caning. The man of God answered the unjust aggressor with a voice perfectly calm: "Friend, if God wills that I be beaten I will endeavor to bear it patiently. Know, however, that I am an American citizen. I desire to know why you attack me with such insults, and by what right you dare attempt to strike me?" These words intimidated our youthful boaster. Without acknowledging his fear he replied, and this time without swearing, "You are armed, or you would not be so bold." He alluded to a case which the Father carried under his arm, and in which he kept the holy oils, his stole, and surplice. "Yes," answered the religious, exhibiting his crucifix, "I am armed, and this is my weapon; I have no need of any other." Our bravo returned less impetuous. He went back to his tavern companions, who received him with loud and reiterated shouts of insulting laughter.

Another day, Father de Theux was performing in the church of Grand Coteau the obsequies of an unhappy man, deceased without the sacraments, and that after a miserable life. He seized the opportunity to address the assistants some severe words on the misfortune of such a life followed by a death so sad. Suddenly a man, known as an enemy to the clergy, and to the Jesuits especially, arose and challenged the Father in a brusque and insolent manner. "I

will not suffer," said he, "that the memory of my friend be publicly insulted." Father de Theux, with his ordinary calmness, turned towards the interlocutor and said: "I am at home. This is my own church. I have the right to speak in it, and to say what I please; but he who now interrupts me has no right to speak here. If he does not like my sermon let him retire from the church." The insolent man immediately went out, to the great satisfaction of the good Catholics who were present, and Father de Theux tranquilly continued his sermon.

In 1844, the Bishop of Cincinnati found himself frequently menaced, as well as the Catholics of his diocese, by tumultuous mobs, composed of the enemies of our holy faith. He asked counsel of Father de Theux. After some moments of reflection, the Father answered, that he would obtain peace and security in those difficult times if he would have recourse to the Sovereign Pontiff, and would encourage the other bishops of the United States to follow his example, so as to obtain the favor of adding, in the preface of the mass, to the word *conception* the prefix *immaculate*. The worthy bishop received the advice with respect, and the request was soon after made at Rome and crowned with success.

In 1845, Father de Theux was attacked with one of those bilious fevers so common in the southwest of the Union. It threatened him with speedy death. The physicians pronounced it mortal. However, his constitution triumphed, the danger ceased, the patient recovered, and, after a few days of convalescence, he was able to devote himself to the exercises of zeal to which he had consecrated his whole life.

At the opening of the year 1846, Father de Theux desired to provide for the education of children too remote from St. Charles, Missouri, to come to the catechetical instructions. He set out to seek and select a suitable position;

when returning, he and his companion lost their way. Overtaken by a cold rain, which wet him through, he was attack with a pleurisy. After some days the disease became more violent, baffling every remedy. The pleurisy soon degenerated into an inflammation of the bowels. Although the Father possessed a strong constitution, labor and hardship had exhausted him to such a degree that he could no longer contend with the malady. He foresaw his approaching end and prepared himself for it with care, convinced that God would ere long call him. During three weeks he endured excruciating pains and sufferings, but preserved every faculty until the end. He employed a portion of time in arranging all the affairs of his charge with perfect exactitude; and preparing himself with redoubled fervor for the passage from time to eternity, he employed the rest in making acts of resignation, of patience, and of other virtues, by means of texts drawn from Holy Writ, ejaculatory prayers, and ardent sighs towards the God of his love. He received the last sacraments with a piety which edified every one. He himself directed the priest who was administering them, and who trembled on seeing the anguish which this worthy religious was enduring. The dying voice of the faithful servant of Jesus was heard distinctly responding to the prayers of the agonizing.

Father de Theux desired to be warned of the progress of his illness, and of the approach of death. Three days before his demise the physician told him that he could not pass the following day. "No, doctor," gayly replied the patient, "I shall not die to-morrow; I shall die on Saturday. Saturday will be the day." He had always wished to die on a day consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, and he always cherished the firm belief that he would not be disappointed in his hope. Early on Saturday morning he began, repeating fre-

quently these invocations: "Jesus, have mercy on me! . . . Mary, pray for me!" There remained for him only a few hours of exile, and it was in the act of repeating these words that Father de Theux yielded up his last sigh, at seven o'clock in the morning, on the 28th of February, 1846, on the day of the week consecrated to the devotion and homage of Mary. His latest petition was heard. It was, no doubt, one of the recompenses of the Mother of God, who is also ours. He had also, in the latter period of his life, established at St. Charles, in the mission church, the Arch-confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to which he had a tender devotion. Whether God had really manifested to him the day on which he should give up his soul, or whether his words were the expression of a strong and inflamed desire, we cannot decide; but the fact is, that he died on Saturday, the 28th of February, 1846.

Father de Theux was one of those men whom it is difficult or impossible to know thoroughly, until after having long and carefully observed their conduct and habits. He never spoke of himself unless morally obliged, or when there was an evident utility; and ordinarily then, according to the manner of the great apostle, he did it in the third person. To give you an example, I will cite the following incident: He was speaking of the necessity of working perseveringly in the control and subjection of the vicious and rebellious inclinations of our corrupt nature, and even its infirmities. To apply his remarks, he indicated that habitual disposition which inclines to sleep in prayer, and the following is the substance of what he said on this point: "I know a man who contended thirty long years against this infirmity. Still he spared no endeavors to free himself from it. He stood, he knelt; he took a step forward or backward according as circumstances would admit, but often he could

not; then he had recourse to this means. He took a pin or needle with him, and without allowing others to perceive him, he tormented his body by piercing it with the sharp little instrument, in order to render his soul fit for meditation when the rule or inclination demanded it." All those who were listening to him were interiorly convinced that he was speaking of himself, and that the eulogium due to such constant and persevering efforts belonged to none but himself.

His character inclined him to severity, but it was solely on himself that he exercised it. No one ever saw him allow himself the least satisfaction which seemed to flatter sensuality. Every thing had its allotted time. Of a healthy constitution, he believed, correctly, that he ought to contribute to its preservation so far as the rules of religious temperance would permit. Hence no singularity at his repasts was ever observed in him, either for the quantity or for the manner, unless we may call singularity a constant habit of adhering invariably, for every kind of beverage, to a measure and quality fixedly determined in accordance with all the rules of Christian temperance and religious poverty.

His modesty was really angelic. His eyes were generally cast down. He raised them frequently towards God when engaged in prayer. It was easy to perceive that he had made a covenant with his eyes, that they were never to look on any dangerous object. His spirit of prayer was calm, without pretension, and continual.

Being a little deaf, he often quitted his room for the exercises of the community before the bell gave the signal, lest he might not hear it. When he arrived too soon, he took his rosary and prayed until the common notice was given.

Sanctifying himself, he edified all those who knew him by an exactitude to the practice of our holy rules. His virtue

consisted in doing ordinary things with an extraordinary perfection.

We may resume this edifying life by saying, that Father de Theux was a genuine model of the religious state. With an inflamed zeal for the salvation of souls, there shone in him great humility, a burning and expansive charity, and complete self-renunciation. He joyfully accepted all privations, all contradictions, without ever seeking to be remarked. He was prayerful, because he was mortified and obedient. I speak knowingly of his rare virtues, for I was so happy as to pass the early years of my scholasticate under his paternal guidance, he being my spiritual director and my professor of theology.

Although there was no ostentation in the practice of his duties, he could not avoid the observant eye of his brethren as well as of strangers. He was known among the people as *the man who performed miracles.* And, without doubt, had he not wrought any other than the sublime examples which he left of the Christian and religious virtues, he would have already deserved that great and glorious title.

His death is a great loss to the society, to the missions of the western States, and to the work of civilization. His obsequies took place on the 2d of May, and his body was transported to St. Stanislaus, near Florissant, a locality which the deceased had edified, as he had so many others, by the practice of all the virtues. His remains find sepulture near those of Fathers Van Quickenborne, Timmermans, Van Lommel, etc.

The impression that he made on the students of St. Xavier's college, Cincinnati, was so profound, that some young Protestants, who had not a very clear idea concerning the canonization of saints, one day inquired seriously of their professor *whether Father de Theux was canonized or*

not? and the professor having explained to them the nature of this ceremony in the Church (which is only done a long time after death), they answered: "Well, however that may be, he deserves it."

Accept, Rev. Father, the assurance of my respect and affection,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XL.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Father John Anthony Elet.

University of St. Louis.

Reverend Father:

I present a brief biographical notice of our countryman, the Rev. Father Elet, of the Society of Jesus, a religious who accomplished much good, and whose memory is held in benediction.

John Anthony Elet was born at St. Amand, in the province of Antwerp, on the 19th of February, 1802. Having completed his early studies in the college of Mechlin with much distinction, under the direction of the venerable Mr. Verloo, he entered the ecclesiastical seminary of the same town. These two establishments, which have given many learned men to Belgium, were ever dear to his heart; to the hour of his death, it was a consolation and delight to him to hear and speak of them.

In 1821, at the age of nineteen, he took the generous resolution of quitting his country, under the guidance of the apostle of Kentucky, the very Rev. Mr. Nerinckx, in order to devote himself to the forsaken missions of North America.

He began his novitiate in Maryland, on the 6th of October, 1828. Before the close of his two years of probation, he was sent, with several Fathers, brothers, and novices, all Belgians, but one brother who was an American, to Mis-

souri, to establish a mission amid the old French settlements, the new American ones, and the wandering tribes of Indians, dispersed throughout this vast territory.

Father Elet finished his course of philosophy and theology under Fathers Van Quickenborne, born at Peteghen-lez-Deynze, and De Theux, born at Liége, and was ordained priest in 1827, by Mgr. Rosati, bishop of St. Louis.

He had the consolation of seeing the mission which was at first so small and weak, erected into a vice-province, and extended into Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Louisiana, Indian Territory (now Kansas and Nebraska), and forming beyond the Rocky Mountains in Oregon, Washington, and California, the nucleus of a new mission, which promises ere long to equal the most flourishing. To all this success he had greatly contributed.

Father Elet, one of the first founders of the university of St. Louis, was president of this institution for several years. In 1840, he was sent to Cincinnati, chief town of Ohio, to take the direction of the college of St. Xavier, which the Rt. Rev. Bishop of that city, Mgr. Purcell (now archbishop), had just confided to the Society of Jesus. In a short time Father Elet erected in addition a free-school, sufficiently extensive to allow the admission of four or five hundred poor children.

Mgr. Flaget, the first, and for a long time the sole bishop of the whole immense valley of the Mississippi, which extends from the Alleghany mountains on the west, to the Rocky Mountains on the east, invited the Jesuit Fathers to Kentucky, and offered them, through his worthy coadjutor and successor, Bishop Spalding, his beautiful college of St. Joseph, situated at Bardstown, thirty-nine miles from Louisville, one of the oldest and most renowned of the educational establishments of this portion of the great American

confederacy; and which has sent out several illustrious bishops, and a great number eminent in Church and State. Father Elet was at that time vice-provincial. A short time after, he opened a house of education at Louisville.

During his provincialship, he sustained a very painful loss in the person of his brother, Father Charles Louis Elet, who having arrived in 1848 to share his labors, died at St. Joseph's college on the 23d of March, 1849, at the age of thirty-seven. He felt a deep sorrow at this death, not only because he lost a brother, but because the province was thus deprived of a zealous priest—snatched away in the flower of his age, and from whom such eminent services might have been expected. Yet his grief was mingled with great consolation. His brother had left in Belgium the remembrance of an exemplary life wholly devoted to the good of others—during his short sojourn in America, he had ever shown himself the model of a fervent and charitable religious. A holy death crowned so edifying a life. The Bishop of Louisville, who visited him in his last hours, announced his death to the Provincial, in a letter as honorable to the noble-hearted writer, as to the pious sentiments of him whose loss it deplores. I insert the letter, it is dated

"Bardstown, 23d of March, 1849.

"My dear Father Elet:—Allow me to unite my voice to that of those numerous friends, who will offer you their sympathy on the occasion of the melancholy event, which this day's post will inform you. I mean the death of your very holy and amiable brother. Providence permitted me to be here at the moment. I had the happiness of visiting him twice. On these occasions, I gave him with my whole heart the episcopal benediction. He devoutly kissed my pectoral cross, which contains a relic of the Holy Cross. I

cannot tell you how much he edified me by his mild tranquillity under the most painful agony. He showed every mark of an elect of God—and if God loved him more than you did, resign him cheerfully into his adorable hands. Is it not better to have a brother in heaven than on earth? I hope to be able to attend his funeral, and will offer the Holy Sacrifice for the repose of his soul. In the midst of the sorrow caused by this mournful and mysterious decree of Providence, I congratulate myself that Kentucky possesses the mortal remains of your holy brother.

"Deploring most sincerely your loss, I am &c.,

"✠ M. J. Spalding, *Bishop.*"

Father John Anthony Elet did not long survive his worthy brother. He had never enjoyed robust health, and had passed about thirty years in America in incessant labor. When still young, he had discovered alarming symptoms of a kind of consumption. It manifested itself anew, and with greater violence, towards the end of the year 1850, during a journey which he made to Louisiana, for business relative to the society. He continued, however, to fill the charge of vice-provincial until about the middle of the following year, when he withdrew to the novitiate of St. Stanislaus, to prepare for death. He beheld it rapidly approaching, but far from fearing, he desired it with his whole heart. Not, that he wished to be delivered from earthly sufferings, but because his love for Christ inflamed him with a burning desire to be united to his divine Saviour. His piety, which had always been distinguished, now seemed to transport him, and, like the glorious sunset, reflected the virtues he had practised during life. Some days before his death, although scarce able to walk, he dragged himself with difficulty to the domestic chapel, and remained there for a considerable

time prostrate before the altar in a profound adoration. On the 1st of October, eve of the Feast of the Holy Angels, at the moment when the Holy Viaticum was brought to him, and the words "*Domine non sum dignus*," were pronounced, he was heard distinctly repeating, "*Non sum dignus, Domine, non sum dignus!*" (I am not worthy, Lord, I am not worthy.) To a prayer in honor of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, he added aloud these words, "*Credo, credo, Domine Jesu!*" (I believe, I believe, Lord Jesus.) He afterwards expressed a lively wish to die on the Feast of the Holy Angels. God, whose will he had so faithfully fulfilled, was pleased to hear the desires of his servant. On the next day, towards midnight, it was proposed to impart the last absolution: "Yes," said he, "it is the moment." Some seconds after a beautiful prayer of St. Charles Borromeo was recited. When they came to the passage where the saint acknowledges that "he has sinned," but adds, that "he had never denied the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," Father Elet exclaimed "never! never!" After having kissed the crucifix for the last time with the most touching devotion, at midnight precisely, during the renewal of the absolution, he expired, like one falling into a gentle slumber.

Father Elet had a special devotion to the Holy Angels, Every year, during his rectorship, on their festival, he requested all the Fathers to offer mass in their honor, so as to obtain a special protection over the whole house. He had also introduced in several places, that devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is observed on the first Friday of every month—encouraging the pious practice of receiving commission on that day, and of making an act of reparation to the Sacred Heart, which a priest recites before the altar, closing the pious service by the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. It was remarked that he expired precisely at

the hour in which the Feast of the Holy Angels terminated, and the first Friday of the month commenced.

Father John Anthony Elet was loved and respected wherever he was known; he was universally regretted. In the United States, a territory almost as extensive as the whole of Europe, where the Catholic clergy are so few that they would scarcely supply one single diocese of Belgium, the death of every good priest leaves a gap in the ranks which all feel. Father Elet's death would shed a gloom over many zealous hearts, did they not hope that from above he will intercede for America, more powerfully than he could have done in our midst.

D. O. M.,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XLI.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

John Baptist Smedts, S. J.

Cincinnati, February 19, 1855.

Reverend Father:

I think you will give pleasure to the relatives and friends, as well as to the former acquaintances of Father Smedts in the seminary of Mechlin, if you would allow space in your *Précis Historiques* to the following notice. His Eminence, the Cardinal was professor in the ecclesiastical seminary at the time of the departure of the deceased; Mgr. De Ram, the Very Rev. MM. Bosmans, Van Hemel, etc., were perfectly well acquainted with him. The rector magnificus, of the university of Louvain, my intimate friend at college, accompanied Father Smedts and myself as far as Contich or Waelhem.*

Father John Baptist Smedt, of the Society of Jesus, died in America, at St. Louis, Missouri, February 19, 1855. Born at Rotselaer, in Brabant, on the 11th of April, 1801, he formed part of the colony of missionaries, who recommenced in 1823, on the banks of the Missouri and the Mississippi, the labors of the former Jesuits, which had been interrupted in the last century by the suppression of the society. He left his country in 1821, with some other

* Mr. De Ram, there asked me for a souvenir, and for want of something better I bent a piece of money with my teeth, and he had it still in 1848.

young Belgians, MM. Felix Verreydt, of Diest; Josse Van Asche, of St. Amand; Peter Joseph Verhaegen, of Haecht; John Anthony Elet, of St. Amand, and Peter John de Smet, of Termonde; all were under the conduct of the venerable Mr. Nerinckx, a Belgian secular priest, a distinguished missionary in America, and the apostle of Kentucky. As it was necessary to be cautious with a suspicious government, inimical to the Catholic religion, and particularly hostile to missions, the departure was as secret as possible. On this account Father Smedts saw himself forced to make a sensibly painful sacrifice, and to set out (as well as his companions), without proffering a last adieu to all that was dearest to him on earth,—parents, brothers, sisters, and friends. They were obliged to beg, for the love of God, and the salvation of souls, the money necessary for a long voyage. Arrived at Amsterdam, the 27th of July, he repaired from thence to the isle of Texel, to shelter himself from the government of Holland, which had instituted a pursuit. On the vigil of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he quitted the island, and embarked in an open fisherman's bark, which conducted him on board of the American ship "Columbia," which was waiting for the missionaries at a great distance from the coast.

On the 6th of October, in the same year, Father Smedts began his novitiate at White-Marsh, Prince George's county, Maryland, where the Jesuits had a mission for many years. He was yet a novice when the provincial, at the special request of Mgr. du Bourg, bishop of Louisiana, and of all the great territories west of the Mississippi, sent him to Missouri, with the five Belgians who came with him, as well as Father Van Quickenborne, of Peteghem (master of novices), Father Timmermans, of Turnhout, and three lay brothers, namely: Peter de Meyer, from the vicinity of Audenarde,

Henri Rieselman, of Amsterdam, and one American. One can with difficulty imagine the fatigues attendant upon this journey of 1200 miles, made on foot, and through a country which was as yet scarcely inhabited, and in the slow-moving, uncomfortable flat-boats of the Ohio River.

The early years of his residence in Missouri were passed in a poor cottage, our novitiate, situated near the village of St. Ferdinand, about eighteen miles from St. Louis. Ordained priest in 1826, he passed several years in the missions in the rising cities and villages of Missouri, constantly distinguishing himself by his great desire for the salvation of souls, and by an indefatigable zeal, which induced him to surmount joyfully all the fatigues attached to the missions of a new country, and almost destitute of priests. Later, he filled during several years, the important charge of master of novices, until 1849. He passed the remainder of his life, either in the missions, or in fulfilling the functions of minister, or of spiritual father in the colleges. He held this last-named charge in the university of St. Louis, and was the spiritual director of a great number of pupils, when he was attacked by the slow consumption of which he died.

His whole life was irreproachable and exemplary. Shunning the world, simple in his manners, patient in sufferings, he had, besides, exhausted his strength in the service of the Lord. For him death had no terrors, he perceived it approaching with a holy peace of soul, and with a strong confidence in the divine mercy; he longed to break the bonds of earth, and be united to his God. Let us indulge the hope that he has gone to meet in heaven the first companion of his missionary toils and sacrifices, Father Elet, and the whole troop of holy pioneers in the laborious missions of the New World.

P. J. De Smet, S. J..

Letter XLII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Francis Xavier d'Hoop.

Louisville (Kentucky), March 29, 1855.

Reverend Father :*

I am about to fulfil a duty by satisfying the quite special request of one of your former disciples, Father Francis X. d'Hoop. I did not expect, on arriving at Louisville, that I was about to assist at his last moments. You will remember that he was one of the band that I conducted to America in 1837.

The Rev. Father d'Hoop died young, and much regretted by all those who had the happiness of knowing him. He did much in his short life, and this country loses in him a fervent and zealous missionary. He leaves in sorrow a great number of children in Jesus Christ, of Protestants converted to the faith, of strayed sheep brought back to the sheepfold of the good pastor. These faithful souls will, I trust, continue to bless the cherished memory of their spiritual Father and he will intercede for them from heaven, that they may persevere in the faith.

As you are acquainted with the family of Father d'Hoop,

* This letter was originally addressed to Rev. Father Vanderhofstadt, of the college of Tournai.

and as I have received many proofs of your great charity, I have taken the liberty of addressing you, in order to request you to communicate to them the news of his decease. The details which I give in the little notice which follows, will contribute to alleviate their grief.

Father Francis Xavier d'Hoop, of the Society of Jesus, died in America. Born at Meulebeke, in the diocese of Bruges, in Belgium, on the 4th of January, 1813, he pursued his studies with success in the college of Thielt, in West Flanders, and afterwards repaired to the college of Turnhout, founded by the venerable De Nef, whose name alone is a eulogium. In this nursery of missionaries, which has furnished so many worthy priests and so many excellent subjects to the country, Father d'Hoop, following the example of a great many others who had preceded him, took the generous resolution of devoting himself to American missions, and of embracing the religious life. In the month of September, 1837, he quitted his country and embarked for the United States, with four companions. On the 21st of November, of the same year, he entered the novitiate of the Jesuits at St. Stanislaus, Missouri. After two years' probation, he was sent in quality of sub-prefect to the university of St. Louis, and applied himself at the same time to the acquiring of the languages most used in the country; in particular, the English, German, French, and Spanish. He was afterwards sent to the college of St. Charles at Grand Coteau, in Louisiana, where, for several years, he taught rhetoric and natural philosophy, with great success. He was ordained priest by Mgr. Blanc, archbishop of New Orleans, on the 29th of August, 1845. From that period until his death, he faithfully fulfilled as a true religious all the charges which were confided to him by his superiors. The cities of St. Louis, of Cincinnati, Chillicothe, Bardstown, and Louisville,

were successively witnesses of his zeal and labors. Although suffering, during several years, with a painful disease in both legs, he always acquitted himself with fidelity in every duty of the charges confided to him by his superiors, and his zeal even appeared to augment with his sufferings.

Father d'Hoop attracted every heart by his religious simplicity, and his charity and zeal.

He contracted the malady, of which he died, on returning from a mission given in Madison, the capital of Indiana. Filled with confidence in God, and with proofs of an entire submission to the divine will, he gave up his soul to his Creator, at Louisville, Kentucky, on the 23d of March, 1855.

The next day, a solemn high mass was celebrated in the cathedral, at which the bishop and a greater part of the clergy of the city assisted. Bishop Spalding himself officiated at the obsequies, and with his accustomed eloquence pronounced the eulogium of the departed. His mortal remains repose in the cemetery of St. Joseph's college, Bardstown.

The Very Rev. Mr. du Pontavice, vicar-general and pastor of Madison, wrote us a very consoling letter: "I learned," says he, "the death of the Rev. Father d'Hoop at the moment when I was vesting to celebrate the holy sacrifice on Passion Sunday. I forgot my text; your letter took its place. I spoke of his death, but I fear not to have edified as much as I ought to have done, for my voice was interrupted with sobs. I will add, that the whole of my numerous auditory was in tears.

"At the holy altar I recalled the blessed moments of his presence. Here he celebrated mass. In this chair of truth his eloquent and most edifying words were heard; words which converted so many sinners, imparted tranquillity and peace to souls hitherto troubled, and called forth abundant

tears of holy joy and happiness. My heart was poured forth, so to speak, from my eyes.

"I shall never forget the moments that he passed with me at my house. I seem yet to hear the consoling words, so fraught with heavenly wisdom, which his lips pronounced. As a man of God, and as a scholar, we found in him an inexhaustible treasure of varied and extensive information. At the first impression of the idea that the last days of his apostolic life were devoted to me, my heart was overwhelmed with grief; but on a moment's reflection, calm joy succeeded to sorrow. Father d'Hoop was ripe for heaven, and I rejoice that it was in my parish he exerted his last effort to obtain the crown of immortality, and that my parishioners received his last adieux. Prostrate before the high altar he pronounced the words of consecration to the sacred hearts of Jesus and of Mary, for the pastor and his flock," etc., etc.

Accept, &c., &c.,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XLIII.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Death of the Right Rev. Dr. Van de Velde, Bishop of Natchez.

St. Louis, December 1, 1855.

Reverend Father:

It is with the deepest sorrow, which will be shared by all our brethren in Belgium, and by the numerous friends of the prelate, that we announce the demise of Dr. Van de Velde, bishop of Natchez.

Although the venerable prelate was far advanced in age, and notwithstanding the length of an apostolical career, the uninterrupted labors of which had excited the admiration of the United States, every thing induced the hope that he would, during a long period to come, bear the burden of the episcopate. His unexpected death was a severe blow to all who knew him. It is an immense, we had almost said an irreparable, loss to the city of Natchez.

James Oliver Van de Velde was born on the 3d of April, 1795, in the environs of Termonde, Belgium. At this epoch, the country was strongly agitated by the partisans of the French revolution. While yet very young, he was confided to the care of a pious aunt, in the village of St. Amand, in Flanders. A confessor of the faith, a worthy priest from France, escaped from the persecution which afflicted his native country, had found a retreat in the same family. It was he who formed the mind and heart of the youthful

James, and directed his education with assiduous care and unwearied toil. James soon became the favorite child of the clergy of St. Amand. He manifested from his tender infancy a lively desire to embrace, at a future day, the ecclesiastical state. In 1810, he was placed in a boarding-school near Ghent, where his talents distinguished him among his school-mates. At the age of eighteen, he taught French and Flemish, at Puers, for two or three years.

While he was engaged in teaching, the religious and political situation of the country changed. In consequence of the battle of Waterloo, the congress of Vienna reunited Belgium to Holland, under William I., of Orange, a Calvinist, violent against the Catholic religion. Like many others, the youthful professor, impatient of the oppressive yoke under which his native land was bowed, formed the project of retiring into England, or into Italy. With this intention, he studied the languages of these two countries. But his former benefactor and confessor, the Very Rev. M. Verlooy, director of the seminary of Mechlin, encouraged him, and proposed to him to accept, in his new institution, a class of Latin, of French, and of Flemish, and to enter his name at the same time on the list of the pupils of the great archiepiscopal seminary. It was there that he perfected himself in the direction of the Latin classes, and that he studied the elements of logic, and of speculative theology.

However, as the intention of quitting his country ever remained present in his mind, his pious and zealous director counselled him to devote himself to foreign missions. To this effect, he was presented to the Rev. Charles Nerinckx, the celebrated missionary of Kentucky, who, on his return from Rome, and some time before leaving for the United States, came to Mechlin. After he had informed himself concerning the state of the missions, and they had deliber-

ated on the continuation of his theological studies, it was agreed that he should accompany Mr. Nerinckx, and that, after terminating his theological course in the seminary of Bishop Flaget, he should devote himself to the exercises of the sacred ministry. But Providence disposed otherwise.

Mr. Nerinckx quitted Europe on the 16th of May, 1817, accompanied by several young Belgians, destined to the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Georgetown, and among them was young Van de Velde. But this last named, before the arrival of the ship in the port of Baltimore, fell, during a tempest, and burst a blood-vessel. Having lost a great deal of blood, he was obliged to be transported to St. Mary's; even after his convalescence, he was incapable of continuing his voyage as far as Kentucky. The Rev. Mr. Bruté, who was then president of the seminary, tried to induce him to remain in Baltimore; the Rev. Mr. Nerinckx, on the contrary, counselled him strongly to follow his travelling companions to Georgetown, and remain with them in the novitiate of the Society of Jesus. He was received with great kindness and charity by the Rev. Anthony Kohlmann, then superior of the missions of the Society of Jesus in America.

After two years of novitiate, he was admitted to the simple vows, according to the custom of the society, and named prefect of classes. At the same time he applied assiduously to the study of poetry, of rhetoric, and philosophy. Such was his progress, that he was named professor of belles-lettres.

In 1827, at thirty-three years of age, he was ordained priest, in Baltimore, by Archbishop Maréchal. During the two years that he was applying to the study of moral and polemical theology, he exercised the functions of chaplain of the Convent and Academy of the Visitation, at Georgetown. In 1829, he was charged with the missions of Rockville and

of Rock Creek, Montgomery county, Maryland. During the autumn of 1831, his superiors sent him to St. Louis, where a college had lately been erected and was in full activity, under the direction of the Society of Jesus, and the patronage of Bishop Rosati. He was welcomed by his brethren there with sincere and joyful cordiality, Soon after, he was named professor of rhetoric and of mathematics. In 1833, he filled the office of vice-president and of procurator of the college, which had just been elevated to the rank of university. He retained this post until 1837, the epoch of his admission to the solemn vows. He was named procurator of the vice-province of Missouri, without ceasing to be vice-president of the university. In 1840, he became president of the university of St. Louis.* The year after, being chosen representative of the vice-province, in the congregation of Procurators, he set out for Rome, where he had several audiences with the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XVI. On his return to St. Louis, he continued his functions as president of the university, until the month of September, 1843, when he was named vice-provincial of Missouri. Under his administration, several churches were built, as well as a more spacious house of novitiate; the colleges and the missions continued to flourish. In 1848, he had, anew, the office of procurator of the vice-province and of socius of the provincial, and accompanied his superior to the council of Baltimore.

Many prelates had been acquainted with him for years. His talents, his zeal, and his piety, induced them to propose him to the Pope for the see of Chicago. In the month of November of the same year, he received his bulls. It was

* An oration, delivered by him on the 4th of July, 1841, was printed at the time.

only on the opinion of the archbishop of St. Louis and of three theologians, who decided that the documents from Rome contained a formal command on the part of the Sovereign Pontiff, that he would accept the nomination. He was consecrated bishop, on Sexagesima Sunday, February 11, 1849, by the Archbishop of St. Louis, the Most Rev. Peter R. Kenrick, assisted by Bishops Loras and Miles. The Right Rev. Dr. Spalding pronounced a discourse adapted to the consecration. This ceremony took place in the church of St. Francis Xavier, attached to the university.

Bishop Van de Velde first visited the country contained in his extensive diocese, which is in the vicinity of St. Louis. He only reached Chicago on Palm Sunday, the day on which he took possession of his episcopal see.

Bishop Van de Velde had suffered during many years with rheumatic pains; he soon perceived that the cold and damp climate of Chicago was extremely injurious to him. The Roman revolution hindered the prelate from addressing himself to the Sovereign Pontiff; as soon as order was re-established, he wrote to the Holy Father, requesting him to accept his resignation, and permit him to return to his former companions of the Society of Jesus. He received a reply from Cardinal Fransoni, which encouraged him to bear the burden of the episcopate with patience and resignation. Some time after, on the occasion of troubles and difficulties which arose in the diocese, and which had an unhappy influence on his corporal ailments, Bishop Van de Velde wrote anew to Rome, imploring the Holy See to accept his resignation. The affair was submitted to the decision of the first national council which was to be held in Baltimore, in the spring of the year 1852. This council resolved to create a new diocese of Quincy, for the southern portion of Illinois; but it decided that, for the advantage of Chi-

cago, Bishop Van de Velde, should not be transferred to it.

The bishop intended visiting France and Belgium after the council; he resolved to extend his voyage as far as Rome, and to bear in person his petitions to the throne of St. Peter. Having been selected to bear the decrees of the council, he reached Rome on the 22d of June. Pius IX. received Bishop Van de Velde with the greatest affability. After two audiences, Dr. Van de Velde received the desired response, viz., that he should be restored to the Society of Jesus, even in quality of titular bishop, and that he should be transferred to a milder and more favorable climate. Bishop Van de Velde quitted Rome on the 16th of September. After visiting some parts of France, Germany, and Belgium, he assisted at Liége at the consecration of Mgr. de Montpellier. He embarked at Liverpool on the 17th of November, and arrived at New York on the 28th of the same month.

After his return to Chicago, he repeated his episcopal visit of the diocese. It was during this circuit that he received his brief of nomination to the vacant see of Natchez, to which he had himself asked to be transferred. The majority of the clergy and of the faithful in Chicago received with deep regret the news that they were to be deprived of the presence of their excellent and worthy bishop, who had labored with so much zeal and ardor for their well-being, and had done so much for the propagation of our holy religion in Illinois. Under his administration seventy churches had been commenced, and the greater number of them completed. He had constructed two Orphan Asylums, without mentioning other establishments and important works.

Mgr. Van de Velde was obliged to remain some time in the place as administrator of Chicago and Quincy, because

the Rev. Mr. Melcher, named bishop of Quincy and administrator of Chicago, had not accepted his nomination. It was only on the 3d of November, 1853, after having purchased a beautiful piece of land as a site for the future cathedral of Quincy, that Bishop Van de Velde quitted his numerous friends in Chicago and set out for Natchez. He arrived there on the 23d of the same month, and was most joyfully received by the clergy and all the people. His great reputation had preceded him. On the 18th of December, after having assisted at the consecration of the Rt. Rev. A. Martin at New Orleans, and after making a spiritual retreat at Spring Hill College, near Mobile, he assumed possession of his new diocese.

The bishop undertook, with fresh zeal, the administration of his new charge, and exerted himself to extend the cause of religion in the State of Mississippi. He immediately visited the different congregations, in order to become acquainted with all the necessities of his diocese, made efforts to procure apostolical laborers in this section of the Master's vineyard, founded two schools, and took measures for completing the cathedral of Natchez, and of erecting a college in it. For this purpose he purchased a beautiful site in the suburbs of the city. But God, in his impenetrable designs, called the good bishop to himself, before he could realize all the plans he had conceived for the well-being of religion, and the instruction of the flock confided to him.

His death had, in its causes, a most afflicting character; he was so unfortunate on the 23d of last October, as to fall on the stairway and break his leg in two places. This distressing news spread rapidly among the Catholic population. The faithful hastened in crowds to the episcopal residence, in order to express their sorrow to their beloved pastor, and tender him all the consolations and assistance of which they

were capable. The inflammation of the leg, excited at first a slight fever, which soon assumed the type of yellow-fever, and provoked agonizing convulsions during several days. During all his illness, the bishop evinced an astonishing patience, a perfect resignation to the will of God, a truly Christian calm, and that amid the severest trials and most painful sufferings. Having received the last consolations of the Church with great devotion, he committed his soul into the hands of his Maker on the 13th of November, the feast of St. Stanislaus, in whose honor he had just finished a novena.

The exposition of the body of the venerable deceased offered a solemn and very imposing spectacle. The corpse, covered with the episcopal vestments, deposited in a rich sarcophagus of metal, was placed in the episcopal abode, on a catafalque in the form of a cross, to which they had given an inclination so as to give the corpse the appearance of being partly erect. He remained thus exposed during the whole night which succeeded his death. A great number of persons of all grades of society and of different religious creeds, visited the mortal remains of the venerable prelate. These visits were prolonged until late in the night. A sweet smile seemed to animate the features of the deceased; to see his eyes partly opened, one would have supposed that he was attentively listening, and with pleasure to those who surrounded him, and that he was preparing to answer their questions. The spectators could scarcely credit that he was no more. Efforts had to be made, especially by the Catholics, to tear themselves from their respected pastor and father.

The obsequies took place on the 14th, at nine o'clock, in St. Mary's cathedral, in the midst of an immense concourse of people, gathered to pay their last tribute of respect and affection to their venerated bishop.

The solemn mass was sung by the Most Rev. Anthony Blanc, archbishop of New Orleans, assisted by the Reverend MM. Francis X. Leroy, Grignon, and Pont. The Rev. Father Tchieder, of the society, pronounced the funeral discourse. After the service, the coffin was deposited in a vault prepared expressly under the sanctuary of the cathedral.

We commend the soul of Bishop Van de Velde, our venerable brother in Christ, to the sacrifices and prayers of our dear fathers and brothers in Belgium, and to the devout remembrance of the numerous friends of the deceased.

I have the honor to be with the deepest respect,

Reverend Father,

Your most humble

and devoted servant,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XLIV.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

John Nobili.

University of St. Louis, Jan. 18th, 1858.

Rev. and dear Father:

You published a short notice of Father Nobili in the *Précis Historiques* for 1857, page 284. Moreover, our very Rev. Father General has given you a token of his paternal kindness, by sending you a letter and copy of a correspondence with Father Congiato, the new superior of the mission, on the death of his predecessor, also published by you, page 293.

I send you as a complement to these data, an extract from the *San Francisco Herald* of March 20, 1856, which consists in a biographical notice of Father Nobili. Will you be so good as to translate it if you find it sufficiently interesting.

On Monday, March 3d, funeral rites were rendered to Father John Nobili, of the Society of Jesus, superior of the college of Santa Clara.

The news of his death spread with great rapidity, in all the country around. This religious was generally known in the whole State, and all those who enjoyed his acquaintance could not refrain from entertaining the highest esteem for him, and, very often, a very profound attachment. It can,

therefore, be easily understood what lively sorrow this melancholy news excited. At San Francisco, in particular, when the telegraph transmitted this sad announcement, an indescribable mourning covered, so to speak, the whole city. The sadness and dejection manifested on every side, made known that all had lost an excellent friend, and that California had experienced a great, a public loss. Only a short time before, this worthy religious had been seen in the streets of San Francisco, and it was with great difficulty that we could be persuaded that he was no more, and that henceforth he would never appear in our midst.

Father Nobili was born in Rome, on the 8th of April, 1812. His parents, distinguished for their piety, educated their children in accordance with the correct principles of Christian morality. His mother, of whom he ever spoke with the most affectionate respect, was a model of all those virtues that form the ornament of a mother. His father was a lawyer.

John, while yet young, was confided to excellent masters. His progress, in the different studies to which he applied, could easily presage much that is elevated in riper years. Endowed with natural talents, of a superior order, he employed his efforts in developing them, and his masters found the task of adorning his faculties and increasing his information, easy and agreeable. But, at the same time that his understanding acquired maturity, his heart, that portion which is so neglected in our day in the plans of education, was not left to itself in order to be overrun, like an untilled soil, by noxious weeds. The seeds of virtue were planted betimes. They cast deep roots, and acquired a great strength long before the passions and a corrupt world could turn them aside with evil principles, or even give them a bad tendency. The pious counsels of his mother were always

for John Nobili an efficacious stimulant to virtue, and he took care never to forget them. The pious wishes of his parents were realized, and all their tender cares fully recompensed by the progress of their son in fervor and in devotion, as well as in profane sciences.

But their joy was complete when he told them, at an age still tender, the generous resolution that he had taken of consecrating himself entirely to the service of God. He was then only sixteen years of age. Having finished his first course of studies in the Roman college, he entered the Society of Jesus on the 14th of November, 1828.

During his novitiate (a period of probation destined to show whether the candidate possesses the qualities necessary for living in accordance with the rules of the society), he was distinguished for his regularity and his punctuality. His dispositions were noble. His superiors named him Prefect of the Novices.

Later, his talents proved so brilliant that when he was studying humanities and rhetoric, his compositions in Latin poetry and other verse, were read in all the public sittings without being subjected to any previous correction. In 1831, he commenced the study of philosophy. In 1834, appointed to teach the humanities, he taught them in the Roman college, and in the colleges of Loretto, Piacenza, and Fermo. The superiors had so exalted an opinion of his acquisitions in rhetoric, that he was appointed to preside over the public exercises of five colleges of his order in Italy. He began his theological studies in 1840, and was ordained priest in 1843.

A short time after, he asked and obtained the permission to go and preach the Gospel to the savages of North America. In company with Father De Smet, he sailed to Oregon, by Cape Horn, towards the end of the year 1843.

During this irksome passage, which lasted nearly eight months, he was subjected to great privations, and was attacked by a disease of the pericardium. On arriving at Fort Vancouver, he was intrusted with the spiritual care of the Canadians, who are employed by the Hudson Bay Company, as well as of the Indians, the number of whom is very considerable along the shores of the Columbia. The ship in which he ascended was near perishing on the bar of the Columbia. The captain was three days in discovering the mouth of the river. At last it was indicated to him by the sight of a vessel which was coming out of it.

On arriving with his companions in Oregon, Father Nobili found himself in presence of an epidemic. It was a virulent type of dysentery, and it was considered contagious. The physicians attributed it to the deleterious qualities of the river water. A great number of savages died of it, especially among the Tchinooks, and the Indians of the Cascades. They were, for the most part, encamped along the rivers, in order to be able to go to Fort Vancouver and obtain the advice of a physician. This was a favorable opportunity of exercising the holy ministry, and Father Nobili seized it with the greatest zeal.

He applied carefully to the study of the language of the Indians, and, after a short time, he was capable of speaking several dialects. In the month of June, 1845, the Father set forth for Willamette, accompanied by a brother novice, to visit the tribes of New Caledonia, among which he made several apostolical excursions.

It would be impossible to give any other (in this notice) than a feeble idea of the miseries, privations, and sufferings of good Father Nobili during his sojourn among the savage tribes. The following description will furnish us with some information concerning the country. We extract it from the

work of Father de Smet, entitled, "Oregon Missions," No. VII., p. 122. "We traversed waving forests of pine and cedar, in which daylight scarcely penetrated. Ere long we entered sombre forests in which we were obliged to clear a road, axe in hand, in order to avoid those collections of trees overthrown and piled up by the tempests of autumn. Some of these forests are so dense, that at the distance of twelve feet I was unable to distinguish my guide. The safest means of extricating one's self from these labyrinths, is for the rider to trust to the sagacity of his horse. If the reins are abandoned to him, he will follow the foot-prints of other beasts of burden. This expedient has served me a hundred times.

"Whatever the imagination can depict as frightful, appears to be aggregated here, to inspire dread. Precipices and ravines ready to swallow the traveller; gigantic summits and elevations of different hues; inaccessible peaks; fearful and impenetrable depths, in which noisy waters are continually precipitating; oblique and narrow paths, by which it becomes necessary to ascend; several times, indeed, I was obliged to take the attitude of a quadruped and walk on my hands.

"The natural pyramids of the Rocky Mountains, seem to challenge the efforts of human invention. They serve as a resting place for the clouds which, descending, surround their gigantic summits in sublime repose. The hand of Omnipotence laid their foundations, and suffers the elements to form them, and from age to age they proclaim his glory."

On whatever side Father Nobili turned his steps among these Indian tribes, he was received with open arms, and they brought him infants to be baptized. An extract from the Journal of Father Nobili, dated Fort Colville, June, 1856, and published in the Oregon Missions, No. XVII., reveals the zeal of the missionary.

"While I remained at Fort Vancouver, I baptized upwards of sixty persons, during a dangerous sickness which raged in the country. The majority of those who received baptism, died with all the marks of sincere conversion. On the 27th of July, I baptized nine children at Fort Okinagane—the children of the chief of the Sioushwaps were of the number. He appeared full of joy at seeing a *Black-gown* direct his course towards their country. On the 29th I left Okinagane, and followed the company. Every night I prayed with the whites and Indians. On the road, three old men came to me, and earnestly begged me to '*take pity on them, and prepare them for heaven!*' Having instructed them in the duties and principles of religion, and the necessity of baptism, I administered to them, and to forty-six children of the same tribe, what seemed to be the height of their desires, the holy sacrament of regeneration.

"On the 11th of August, a tribe of Indians, residing about the Upper Lake on Thompson's River, came to meet me. They exhibited towards me all the marks of sincere and filial attachment. They followed me several days to hear my instructions, and *only departed* after having exacted a promise that I would return in the course of the following autumn or winter, and make known to them the glad tidings of salvation.

"At the Fort of the Sioushwaps, I received a visit from all the chiefs, who congratulated me on my happy arrival among them. They raised a great cabin to serve as a church, and as a place to teach them during my stay. I baptized twelve of their children. I was obliged, when the salmon fishing commenced, to separate for some months from these dear Indians, and continue my route to New Caledonia.

"I arrived at Fort Alexandria on the 25th. All the tribes I met manifested towards me the same emotions of

joy and friendship. To my surprise I found at the Fort a frame church. I returned in the fall and remained there a month, engaged in all the exercises of our holy ministry. The Canadians performed their religious duties—I joined several in marriage, and administered to many the holy communion. Twenty-four children and forty-seven adults received baptism.

"On the 2d of September, I ascended the River Frazer, and after a dangerous trip, arrived, on the 12th, at Fort George, where the same joy and affection on the part of the Indians attended me. Fifty Indians had come down from the Rocky Mountains, and patiently awaited my arrival for nineteen days, in order to have the consolation of witnessing the ceremony of baptism. I baptized twelve of their children, and twenty-seven others, of whom six were adults advanced in age. I performed there the ceremonies of the planting of the cross.

"On the 14th, the feast of the exaltation of the holy cross, I ascended the River Nesqually, and on the 24th, arrived at the Fort of Lake Stuart. I spent eleven days in giving instructions to the Indians, and had the happiness of abolishing the custom of burning the dead, and that of inflicting torments upon the bodies of the surviving wives or husbands. They solemnly renounced all their juggling and idolatries. Their great medicine-hall, where they used to practise their superstitious rites, was changed into a church. It was blessed and dedicated to God under the patronage of St. Francis Xavier. The planting of the cross was solemnly performed with all the ceremonies proper to such occasions. Sixteen children and five old men received baptism.

"The 24th October, I visited the village of the Chilcotins. This mission lasted twelve days, during which time I bap-

tized eighteen children and twenty-four adults, and performed eight marriages. I blessed here the first cemetery, and buried, with all the ceremonies of the ritual, an Indian woman, the first converted to Christianity. I next visited two other villages of the same tribe—in the first I baptized twenty persons, of whom three were adults. In the second, two chiefs with thirty of their nation received baptism, and two were united in matrimony. Polygamy prevailed everywhere, and everywhere I succeeded in abolishing it. In a neighboring tribe I baptized fifty-seven persons, of whom thirty-one were adults. I also celebrated nine marriages.

"After my return to the Sioushwaps, I baptized forty-one persons, of whom eleven were adults. I visited five more villages among the neighboring tribes, among whom I baptized about two hundred persons. I performed the ceremony of the planting of the cross, in eight different places, and founded four frame churches which were constructed by the savages.

"On an average, each village or tribe consists of about two hundred souls.

"In the neighborhood of Fort Alexandria the number of souls amounts to	1255
About Fort George	343
In the neighborhood of Frazer's Lake	258
" " Stuart's Lake	211
" " McLeod's Lake	80
" " Fort Rabine	1190
" " Bear Lake	801
Total number of souls	4138

"Population on Thompson's River, or on the land of the Sioushwaps or Atnass.

"The number of Sioushwaps, so called, is.....	583
" of Okinagaues.....	685
Population on the North Branch.....	525
" on Lake Superior.....	322
" at the Fountain of Frazer Lake.....	1127
Number of Knife Indians.....	1530
Total number of souls.....	4772."

During his sojourn in New Caledonia, Father Nobili had to endure great privations. Through the course of one whole year, his only subsistence was a sort of moss or grass and roots. His chief food was horse-flesh, and often he was reduced to eating the flesh of dogs and wolves. What he suffered from cold, hunger, and other privations is only known to God. To man, the reality would seem incredible.

After having dwelt among the savage tribes six years, during which he showed himself a worthy disciple of Jesus Christ, in bringing back souls to God, and in eradicating the vices which predominate in them, in obedience to the orders of his superiors, he forsook his dear Indians and came to California, in 1849, with his health greatly enfeebled.

He remained some time in San Francisco, and afterwards went to San-José, in which place he tarried until the spring of 1851. The whole period of his residence there, he excited the admiration of that city, with its inhabitants of various religious denominations, by his indefatigable labors. When the cholera broke out in 1850, the horse of the man of God was saddled day and night, so as not to lose a minute of time, and to be able to visit without delay those who

might call for his services. The labors of Father Nobili are well known in that place—they will live forever in the memory of those who received his assistance, or who witnessed his consuming charity.

In the spring of 1851, His Grace Archbishop Alemany appointed him to a mission in Santa Clara. As soon as he entered on this new charge, he commenced founding the college of Santa Clara. This college succeeded so well, that it is known as the first educational institution in the State.

It is unnecessary to speak of his trials and his labors since the establishment of this college—the whole State knows and appreciates them. It is not an unmeaning phrase when we say that the "greater glory of God," device of the society, was the *primum mobile* of all has actions. How shall we express the deep solitude with which he watched over the college? He applied earnestly with an incessant attention to its increase, to the direction of its progress, to the promotion of its interests, and to the augmentation of its material resources. He exercised a paternal kindness and care towards the pupils intrusted to him. He was affable and complaisant towards those who visited him, and displayed a ready religious hospitality. His conduct towards all was polite and agreeable, but full of a certain dignity which conciliated the respect and admiration, not only of Catholic laymen, but even of those who did not acknowledge his clerical character. He was scrupulously exact in fulfilling the minor observances of the religious rule. Divine service had peculiar charms for him; he loved its offices and its liturgy, and he paid extreme attention to all that concerns the beauty of the sanctuary, for all that regards in any manner the exterior glory of the mysterious Daughter of the King of heaven. In fine, his strong faith, his irreproachable man-

ners, his pure life, his zeal, his charity, and his other countless virtues, caused him to shine as a burning light before his own people, and before "those without."

All these traits, and a great number of others not less remarkable, are precious in the sight of God, full of edification for men, and do honor to the memory of the deceased. It is unnecessary that we should dwell longer upon them, or develop them more at length; the radiance which already surrounds them, has bestowed a lustre to which no words of ours can add. However, we cannot refrain from relating one more circumstance: it is the exemplary patience with which he supported troubles and endured sufferings, especially the pains of his last malady. The illness that snatched him away (the lock-jaw) is extremely painful. The sufferings that it ordinarily causes, were augmented by the irritability of the nervous constitution of the patient; nevertheless the Father endured the whole courageously, and with an entire resignation to the divine will. He requested the prayerful assistance of others, so that he might be favored with the grace of perfect resignation. In his last hour, during the moments that preceded his departure, when his eyes wandered from object to object as if to seek some aid, every time that they fell upon the crucifix they rested there, relieved and comforted by that image of the divine Redeemer, and by the recollection of the passion of Jesus. It was in the act of kissing this sacred emblem, that Father Nobili closed his eyes, and his spirit returned to its Creator.

After the death of this lamented Father, nothing was omitted that the Catholic worship prescribes, or that the respect and affection of his religious companions could suggest, to honor his mortal remains. His body was directly carried to the church of the mission, and placed upon a

catafalque before the grand altar. His Grace Archbishop Alemany celebrated the solemn mass of requiem, assisted by the Rev. Father Llebarra, vicar-general, Rev. Mr. Gallagher, pastor of St. Mary's cathedral, San Francisco, and some other Jesuit Fathers. The Rev. Mr. Gallagher pronounced the funeral oration, and gave an eloquent and touching abridgment of the religious and estimable career of Father Nobili. It is to him that we are particularly indebted for the more important facts that we have presented in this imperfect notice of this illustrious apostle of California, who devoted himself without reserve to religion, and to the education of youth.

Accept, Rev. and dear Father, with this biographical notice of one of my Oregon companions, the assurance of my affectionate respect.

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XLV.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

Anthony Eysvogels.

University of St. Louis, July 16, 1857.

Rev. and dear Father:

I have few details as to the life and death of Father Eysvogels, yet I send what I find.

Anthony Eysvogels was born in the little village of Oss, situated in North Brabant, Holland, Jan. 13, 1809. After finishing his divinity course in his native land, he came to America and began his novitiate in Missouri, Dec. 31, 1835.

On the 1st of May, 1838, Father Eysvogels set out with Fathers Verhaegen and Claessens for the Kickapoo mission. Thence, his superiors sent him to Washington, Mo., and from this place to Westphalia in the Osage district. There a holy death closed an exemplary life. The good Father, resigning himself entirely into the hands of the Lord, prepared for his great passage by prayer and the reception of the last sacraments, which but little preceded his death. His illness was brought on by the care lavished by the holy religious on a patient suffering with small-pox, which disease he himself took. Father Eysvogels was only forty-eight and a half years old. The interment was made with solemnity by Father Ferdinand Helias, and his parishioners raised a subscription to erect a monument to the zealous director of their souls.

Accept, Rev. Father, the assurance of my regard and esteem

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

Letter XLVI.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.

John B. Duerinck, Missionary of the Potawatomies, America.

University of St. Louis, Dec. 23, 1857.

Reverend Father:

A fatal and most deplorable accident has just deprived us of one of our most zealous and indefatigable missionaries. Father John B. Duerinck, superior of the mission of St. Mary's, among the Potawatomies, in the Territory of Kansas, perished on the 9th of this month, while descending the Missouri river in a small boat. This is an irreparable loss to this fine mission.

I cannot describe to you how deep is the affliction which this mournful news has caused us. The first report reached us on Sunday, the 18th instant. We were expecting him at St. Louis, whither he had been summoned by his superiors, in order to prepare himself for his last vows in the society. A letter dated November 24th, in which he announced his departure from the mission, had arrived some days before. The following is an extract:

"I intend to repair to the town of Leavenworth and thence to St. Louis, in the course of this week. The chiefs of the tribe, the warriors, sages, seniors, and young men, have all decreed to send a deputation to Washington, or rather two, one composed of Indians of the prairie, Pota-

watomies not converted, and the other of Indians of the mission. These latter have put me on their list, in order that I may accompany them to Washington to advance the interests of the mission, and aid them in attaining with more certainty the object of their proceedings with the government. It will belong to the superior to decide on what I shall do. Whatsoever be his decision, I shall be content."

The earliest news of the death of the zealous missionary, although still not very precise, was accompanied by circumstances which hardly left any doubt concerning his fate. Two or three days after, we learned certain details of his loss. He went from the mission of St. Mary's to Leavenworth, on horseback, a distance of about eighty miles. Thence he went, in a stage-coach, fifty miles further, to the town of Kansas. He afterwards set out from Kansas, in a boat, with four other travellers, intending to descend the Missouri river as far as a place where steamboats would be met, which, on account of the lowness of the waters in this season of the year, cannot go up the river as high as Fort Leavenworth. Descending the river is a very perilous enterprise, considering the rapidity of the current, and the numerous forest-trees, detached from the shores and buried in the bed of the river. To strike against one of these "sawyers" is enough to capsize the boat, and every year a number of boats are lost in this manner. The danger was certainly not unknown to Father Duerinck: but, a son of obedience, and a man of zeal, he thought, without doubt, that he ought not to recoil before a danger which so many travellers encounter every day. This devotedness cost him his life. Twenty-five miles below Kansas city, the point of their departure, between the towns of Wayne and Liberty, the boat, striking against a snag, capsized. All the passengers were thrown into the

water, except two, who managed to cling to the sides of the boat, and holding on to it until the current brought them to a sand-bank. The three others, among whom was Father Duerinck, perished.

Such a death has, without doubt, its melancholy side; but it appears glorious when we reflect on the cause which occasioned it, and on the example of so many holy missionaries and illustrious apostles who, adventuring with courage into dangers, in the keeping of God alone, have perished, far from all human aid, but so much the more protected in their last moments by him for whose honor they had exposed their lives.

John Baptist Duerinck was born at St. Gilles, near Termonde, on the 8th of May, 1809. Formed to piety from his infancy, by the lessons and examples of his pious parents, he cast, from that time, the foundation of those Christian and religious virtues, of which he offered, in after years, so beautiful an example. When a college student, his excellent conduct, and his success, attracted to him the esteem and affection of his professors and class-mates; and the president of the episcopal seminary of Ghent remembers him still as one of those who had afforded him most pleasure during their studies in philosophy.

He had long experienced a desire to devote himself to the conversion of the savages of North America. After obtaining the consent of his worthy parents, he embarked at Antwerp, on the 27th of October, 1833, and entered the Society of Jesus, in Missouri, in which he commenced his novitiate at St. Stanislaus, near the village of Florissant, in the opening of the year following, the 16th of January, 1834. Having finished his novitiate, he passed several years in different colleges. His talents for financial affairs caused him to be intrusted successively with the charge of

treasurer in our colleges at Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Bardstown.

Every where, the Father Duerinck showed an exemplary exactitude in fulfilling his duties, and constantly gave proofs of the virtues which characterize the true religious. His zeal, his devotedness, as well as the frankness of his temper, gained him friends, not only among ourselves, but also with strangers and Protestants.

A great admirer of nature, he consecrated his hours of leisure to the study of its wonders and secrets, and to the contemplation in them of the beauty and omnipotence of God. He was attached especially to the study of botany, and he acquired a vast and thorough knowledge of this branch of natural science. He traversed a great portion of Ohio and Illinois, in search of curious flowers and all kinds of rare plants, and made a beautiful and exquisite collection of them, which is preserved in the college of St. Francis Xavier, in Cincinnati. The botanical society of that city elected Father Duerinck a perpetual member, and offered him the chair of professor of botany; but his modesty and his numerous duties would not suffer him to accept the charge. A new plant that he discovered, and which received, in his honor, the name *Prunus Duerinckiana*, shows how they esteemed his researches in the science.

The distinctive trait of his character was, a great natural energy, joined to an ardent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. When there was question of gaining his neighbor to God, no obstacle seemed to be able to arrest him. He made himself all to all, according to the example of St. Paul, in order to win them to Jesus Christ. He had admirably adapted his manners to the customs and ideas of that section of country, and if he could not convert the numerous Protestants with whom he was in relation, he

rarely failed gaining their good will; and it is a great step towards their conversion, to induce them to esteem the Catholic priest.

In 1849, Father Duerinck was sent among the Indians. This was the accomplishment of that desire which had conducted him to America. He employed all his energy and all his talents, in this difficult work. The mission of the Potawatomies, of which he became the superior, owes to him, in great part, its actual prosperity. The greater number of the savages of this tribe had been converted for several years; hence it was necessary to consolidate the work of their conversion, by attaching them to the civilized life, and leading them to prefer agriculture, and the other useful arts, to the pleasures of the chase and the indolence so characteristic of the barbarous life. Already, previous to his arrival, the missionaries had persuaded them to cultivate some little fields, animating them by their example, and by motives of faith. It had been discovered, that when there was question of labor, the motives of religion were the only ones which had any empire over the hearts of the Indians, and they succeeded in inducing them to work in a spirit of penance. Profiting by this strong and simple faith, Father Duerinck endeavored to excite them to more extensive labors, and, by causing them to discover a certain plenty in the culture of their fields, he allured them into a forgetfulness of the dangerous life of the plains and forests. With the purpose of forming youth to an intelligent labor, schools of arts and trades had been established for the youth of the tribe. He made two journeys to Washington, to interest the government in this work, and to obtain assistance in it. These schools have obtained a permanent existence.

During these latter years, the mission of St. Mary's has been exposed to great danger of demoralization; first, in

consequence of the great number of caravans which have passed by the mission since the discovery of the gold mines of California, and, secondly, on account of the immense tide of emigration which has taken place since Kansas became a Territory. Amid these dangers, the neophytes, thanks to the care of the missionaries, have preserved their ancient regularity and their early fervor.

At the sound of the bell, the savages assemble, with the same piety as formerly, either in the church or in their dwellings. The confessions and communions are not less numerous. All, not excepting the Protestants, admire their zeal and their piety.

So far, the neophytes have maintained peace with the whites. Rare occurrence; for ordinarily the approach of the whites is the signal of a war of extermination, if they cannot force the savages to quit their cabins and emigrate into new and more remote deserts. However, the danger of their present situation cannot be dissembled. They are already surrounded by whites, eager to take possession of 19,200 acres of land, that the government has solemnly granted them by treaty. It is especially in such a situation that the death of Father Duerinck, their father and benefactor, who was tenderly devoted to them, and whom they consulted in all their important enterprises and in all their difficulties, will be keenly felt. It is undeniably a real calamity for the whole tribe.

Father Duerinck was superintendent of the Catholic schools among the Potawatomies. Several of his letters have been published in the annual documents which accompany the message of the President of the United States. They are found in the report of the Secretary of the Interior, vol. i., and all bear the date of "St. Mary's Potawatomie Mission, Kansas Territory." They are as follows: 1852,

September 24, pp. 379-381 ; 1853, August 31, pp. 325-327 ; 1854, September 25, pp. 317-319 ; 1855, October 1, pp. 422-425 ; 1856, October 20, pp. 666-669 ; 1857, October 17. The last one (the 6th September, 1857,) was published on the 17th of last October, in the *Boston Pilot*, and will appear, like the others, in the next report of the Secretary of the Interior.

The officers or agents of the government of the United States have always rendered the most honorable testimony to the zeal and success of Father Duerinck. In 1855, Major G. W. Clarke, agent of government for the Potawatomies, speaking, in his annual report to the commissary of Indian affairs, concerning the two schools established in the mission, one under the direction of the Fathers, the other under the direction of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, thus expressed himself: "I cannot speak in terms too favorable of the condition of these two establishments. Besides the ordinary course of literary education for girls, they learn sewing, knitting, embroidery, and all the other labors of a well-understood domestic training. An industrial school is attached to this institution. In it the youth are taught useful and practical arts, such as agriculture, horticulture, etc. Father Duerinck is a man endowed with great energy, and understands business well. He is entirely devoted to the welfare of the Potawatomies, of whom he has shown himself the friend and father, and who, on their side, entertain the highest esteem for him. I have no hesitation in expressing my conviction of the utility of this establishment. Its effects are visible in the neatly-kept houses, and the little well-cultivated fields of the Indians of the mission, and in the spirit of order which reigns in the environs."

In his report of 1856, Major Clarke renews these approving expressions. "Since last year," says he, "the Indians of this

agency have made rapid progress. They have cultivated more extensive fields, and manifested, in different ways, their desire to conform to the customs of civilized life. The school of St. Mary's mission occupies the first rank among the schools of the missions, and merits my most sincere praises. The labors of Father Duerinck, and of the 'Religious of the Sacred Heart,' serve not only to ameliorate the rising generation, and form it to the customs of civilized life, but their good examples, and their counsels, evidently have a great influence on the well-being of the adult population."

The numerous emigrants who are settled in the neighborhood of the mission, have ever displayed the highest esteem for Father Duerinck.

The public journals have announced his death as a calamity, which not only will leave a great void in the Indian mission, but will excite lively regret among his numerous friends in the different States, and, above all, in the inhabitants of the new territory who have had the happiness of knowing him. He enjoyed universal esteem.

The following is the homage paid to the memory of Father Duerinck, by all his religious brethren in the Potawatomie mission:

"Rev. Father Duerinck, whom we all regret with tears, arrived at the mission of St. Mary's in the beginning of November, 1849, in circumstances the most critical and embarrassing, in the judgment of all persons versed in business matters. The mission had just accepted a school of boys, and one of girls, on conditions so onerous that good sense pronounced them intolerable. They were obliged to nothing less than to support annually about one hundred and twenty children, as boarders, for the small sum of fifty dollars each: that is to say, for fourteen cents a day, lodging, food, clothing, books, paper, etc., must be furnished to each child; while no

hotel-keeper in the place would have consented to board and lodge any person for less than five dollars per week. Further: the United States Government had allowed a certain sum for the furnishing or the construction of edifices, and, by an addition of unfortunate circumstances, the task had scarcely been begun, when the money was already expended. Well, thanks to the intelligence and activity of Father Duerinck, the mission met all these expenses, and triumphed over all the obstacles. But how many trials and fatigues were necessary to shelter his dear Indian family from indigence! Crossing immense deserts, to buy animals at a low price, and conduct them to St. Mary's; descending and ascending the Missouri, a distance of several hundreds of miles; continually on the watch, in order to discover an opportunity favorable for the arrangement and disposition of the products of the farm; exerting himself in every way to find means of subsistence; ever imagining new resources, forming new plans, and executing new projects, to meet the wants of the great family which had been intrusted to him, is what Father Duerinck nobly undertook for the good of the mission, and in which he succeeded perfectly.

"The Father had a strongly-marked character, or rather a soul virtuously courageous. The infirmities to which he was subject, never drew from him a plaint, nor produced the least alteration in his manners. For him, winter seemed to have lost its frosty rigors, and summer its stifling heats. He continually braved the inclemency of the seasons. We have seen him undertake a long journey in the extreme cold, and continue it in defiance of the icy breath of the north wind, and on arriving at the house where he proposed to lodge, perceive that some of his limbs had become as hard as stone by the cold which had stiffened them; so that, in order not to lose the use of them, it became necessary to bathe them

in ice water. He neglected his sleep, he forgot his meals; he was ready for every sacrifice in the interest of his beloved Indians. Amid all these many labors and hardships, his humor was always equable, his brow serene, his temper patient, his manner affable. Neither the pecuniary difficulties, nor the embarrassments of every kind which sprung up at every instant, could trouble the peace of his soul. The practice of humility was, so to speak, natural. Never any thing savoring of pretension; nothing affected was ever remarked in his air; never a word, which, even remotely, breathed vanity. He was completely ignorant of those refined allusions by which self-love seeks sometimes to give importance to personality. Although superior, and highly esteemed by all those who know how to appreciate good manners, his great delight was to apply, like the last of the domestics, to the most menial works. He was so dead to all that is called 'pride of life,' that he never opposed but an imperturbable brow to the bitter reproaches, to the outrages which he sometimes received from people of little education. Very often, on the earliest occasion, he would avenge himself for these insults by rendering some striking service to the person who had insulted him. When he was reproached with being too kind in regard to certain people who were known to be enemies to the Catholics, 'Well,' replied he, 'we will force them to like us.' Father Duerinck was charitable, but his charity was prudent and enlightened. In short, no one ever did more good among the Indians of these sections. He assisted the poor and infirm liberally. He comprehended better than any one, by what way to procure the savages the benefit of civilization. He aided them in every way, exciting them to labor, and recompensing their industry. This, in his case, succeeded so well that the Potawatomies of St. Mary's excel greatly those of the other vil

ages, in those qualities which constitute good citizens. Those who have had the most intimate relations with the Father, know how far his liberalities extended, and their prayers, inspired by the most sincere gratitude, will never be wanting to call down upon our good Potawatomies the benedictions of the God of mercy.

"The death of good Father Duerinck is an incomparable loss. In him, St. Mary's has lost him who was its soul and life; the Indians, a signal benefactor; the widows and orphans, an experienced counsellor; the mission, an excellent superior; and we, the best of Fathers. This blow (as fatal as unexpected) has thrown every one into mourning—bitter mourning. Nothing could console us for so sudden a loss, did we not know that nine years of trials and abnegation, of continual combats against his own inclinations, undertaken and sustained for the greater glory of God, are the best preparations for a holy death."

To this fraternal token of respectful affection I will add, Rev. Father, the homage which the agent of government (Colonel Murphy) paid Father Duerinck. When he was apprised of his death, he wrote in these terms to Major Haverty, superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis:

"The model school of the mission of St. Mary's continues without intermission, under its ancient preceptors, its salutary operations, with its habitual and regular system. At this moment (December 2d), the mission and the whole vicinity are plunged in profound grief, caused by the death, sudden and unexpected, of its superior, the Father Duerinck. I consider this loss as one of the greatest calamities which could happen to the Potawatomies, of whom he was the devoted friend and the Father. It is one of those decrees of Providence, infinitely wise, to which we must submit in all humility. Happily for the mission school at St. Mary's, the

vacancy left by Father Duerinck can be filled. The children will continue to receive the same kindness and the same instruction. It is especially the parents and young men who lose the most in being deprived of his good advice and his example."

This letter is, no doubt, very consoling, Rev. Father, for the missionaries, and very encouraging to those whom God calls to become so. May generous Belgium send us other zealous missionaries, as well to respond to our ever-increasing wants, as to replace those whom death, alas! too rapidly mows down.

I commend to your holy sacrifices, and to your prayers, and to the pious souvenirs of all our dear brethren in Belgium, the soul of the Rev. Father Duerinck.

I have the honor to be,

Rev. and dear Father,

Revæ Væ in Cto,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

THE END.

A053004
THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

PUBLICATIONS

OF

P. J. KENEDY,

Excelsior Catholic Publishing House,

5 BARCLAY ST., NEAR BROADWAY, NEW YORK,

Opposite the Astor House

Adventures of Michael Dwyer	**$1 00**
Adelmar the Templar. A Tale	**40**
Ballads, Poems, and Songs of William Collins	**1 00**
Blanche. A Tale from the French	**40**
Battle of Ventry Harbor	**20**
Bibles, from $2 50 to	**15 00**
Brooks and Hughes Controversy	**75**
Butler's Feasts and Fasts	**1 25**
Blind Agnese. A Tale	**50**
Butler's Catechism	**8**
" " with Mass Prayers	**30**
Bible History. Challoner	**50**
Christian Virtues. By St. Liguori	**1 00**
Christian's Rule of Life. By St. Liguori	**30**
Christmas Night's Entertainments	**60**
Conversion of Ratisbonne	**50**
Clifton Tracts. 4 vols	**3 00**
Catholic Offering. By Bishop Walsh	**1 50**
Christian Perfection. Rodriguez. 3 vols. *Only complete edition*	**4 00**
Catholic Church in the United States. By J. G. Shea. Illustrated	**2 00**
Catholic Missions among the Indians	**2 50**
Chateau Lescure. A Tale	**50**
Conscience; or, May Brooke. A Tale	**1 00**
Catholic Hymn-Book	**15**
Christian Brothers' 1st Book	**13**

Catholic Prayer-Books, 25c., 50c., *up to* **12 00**

☞ Any of above books sent free by mail on receipt of price. Agents wanted everywhere to sell above books, to whom liberal terms will be given. Address

P. J. KENEDY, Excelsior Catholic Publishing House,
5 Barclay Street, New York.

Christian Brothers' 2d Book	$0 25
" " *3d* "	63
" " *4th* "	88
Catholic Primer	6
Catholic School-Book	25
Cannon's Practical Speller	25
Carpenter's Speller	25
Dick Massey. An Irish Story	1 00
Doctrine of Miracles Explained	1 00
Doctrinal Catechism	50
Douay "	25
Diploma of Children of Mary	20
Erin go Bragh. (Sentimental Songster.)	25
El Nuevo Testamento. (Spanish.)	1 50
Elevation of the Soul to God	75
Epistles and Gospels. (Goffine.)	2 00
Eucharistica; or, Holy Eucharist	1 00
End of Controversy. (Milner.)	75
El Nuevo Catecismo. (Spanish.)	15
El Catecismo de la Doctrina Christiana. (Spanish Catechism)	15
El Catecismo Ripalda. (Spanish)	12
Furniss' Tracts for Spiritual Reading	1 00
Faugh a Ballagh Comic Songster	25
Fifty Reasons	25
Following of Christ	50
Fashion. A Tale. 35 Illustrations	50
Faith and Fancy. Poems. Savage	75
Glories of Mary. (St. Liguori.)	1 25
Golden Book of Confraternities	50
Grounds of Catholic Doctrine	25
Grace's Outlines of History	50
Holy Eucharist	1 00
Hours before the Altar. Red edges	50
History of Ireland. Moore. 2 vols	5 00
" " O'Mahoney's Keating	4 00
Hay on Miracles	1 00
Hamiltons. A Tale	50
History of Modern Europe. Shea	1 25
Hours with the Sacred Heart	50
Irish National Songster	1 00
Imitation of Christ	40

Catholic Prayer-Books, 25c., 50c., *up to* 12 00

☞ Any of above books sent free by mail on receipt of price. Agents wanted everywhere to sell above books, to whom liberal terms will be given. Address

P. J. KENEDY, Excelsior Catholic Publishing House,
5 Barclay Street, New York.

Irish Fireside Stories, Tales, and Legends. (Magnificent new book just out.) About 400 pages large 12mo, containing about 40 humorous and pathetic sketches. 12 fine full-page Illustrations. *Sold only by subscription.* Only.....	**$1 00**
Keeper of the Lazaretto. A Tale.....	40
Kirwan Unmasked. By Archbishop Hughes.....	12
King's Daughters. An Allegory.....	75
Life and Legends of St. Patrick......	1 00
Life of St. Mary of Egypt.....	60
" " ***Winefride***.....	60
" " ***Louis***.....	40
" " ***Alphonsus M. Liguori***.....	75
" " ***Ignatius Loyola.*** 2 vols.....	3 00
Life of Blessed Virgin.....	75
Life of Madame de la Peltrie.....	50
Lily of Israel. 22 Engravings.....	75
Life Stories of Dying Penitents.....	75
Love of Mary.....	50
Love of Christ.....	50
Life of Pope Pius IX......	1 00
Lenten Manual.....	50
Lizzie Maitland. A Tale.....	75
Little Frank. A Tale.....	50
Little Catholic Hymn-Book.....	10
Lyra Catholica (large Hymn-Book).....	75
Mission and Duties of Young Women.....	60
Maltese Cross. A Tale.....	40
Manual of Children of Mary.....	50
Mater Admirabilis.....	1 50
Mysteries of the Incarnation. (St. Liguori.)....	75
Month of November.....	40
Month of Sacred Heart of Jesus.....	50
" " ***Mary***.....	50
Manual of Controversy.....	75
Michael Dwyer. An Irish Story of 1798.....	1 00
Milner's End of Controversy.....	75
May Brooke; or, Conscience. A Tale.....	1 00
New Testament.....	50
Oramaika. An Indian Story.....	75
Old Andrew the Weaver.....	50
Preparation for Death. St. Liguori.....	75

Catholic Prayer-Books, 25c., 50c., *up to* **12 00**

☞ Any of above books sent free by mail on receipt of price. Agents wanted everywhere to sell above books, to whom liberal terms will be given. Address

P. J. KENEDY, Excelsior Catholic Publishing House,
5 Barclay Street, New York.

Prayer. By St. Liguori	$0 50
Papist Misrepresented	25
Poor Man's Catechism	75
Rosary Book. 15 Illustrations	10
Rome: Its Churches, Charities, and Schools. By Rev. Wm. H. Neligan, LL.D	1 00
Rodriguez's Christian Perfection. 3 vols. *Only complete edition*	4 00
Rule of Life. St. Liguori	40
Sure Way; or, Father and Son	25
Scapular Book	10
Spirit of St. Liguori	75
Stations of the Cross. 14 Illustrations	10
Spiritual Maxims. (St. Vincent de Paul)	40
Saintly Characters. By Rev. Wm. H. Neligan, LL.D	1 00
Seraphic Staff	25
" ***Manual,*** 75 cts. to	3 00
Sermons of Father Burke, plain	2 00
" " " gilt edges	3 00
Schmid's Exquisite Tales. 6 vols	3 00
Shipwreck. A Tale	50
Savage's Poems	2 00
Sybil: A Drama. By John Savage	75
Treatise on Sixteen Names of Ireland. By Rev. J. O'Leary, D.D	50
Two Cottages. By Lady Fullerton	50
Think Well On't. Large type	40
Thornberry Abbey. A Tale	50
Three Eleanors. A Tale	75
Trip to France. Rev. J. Donelan	1 00
Three Kings of Cologne	30
Universal Reader	50
Vision of Old Andrew the Weaver	50
Visits to the Blessed Sacrament	40
Willy Reilly. Paper cover	50
Way of the Cross. 14 Illustrations	5
Western Missions and Missionaries	2 00
Walker's Dictionary	75
Young Captives. A Tale	50
Youth's Director	50
Young Crusaders. A Tale	50

Catholic Prayer-Books, 25c., 50c., *up to* 12 00

☞ Any of above books sent free by mail on receipt of price. Agents wanted everywhere to sell above books, to whom liberal terms will be given. Address

P. J. KENEDY, Excelsior Catholic Publishing House,
5 Barclay Street, New York.

Cage
Rare
E
78
W5
S6
1859

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA
91711

A 053004

DEMCO

HISTORY OF THE MISSIONS AND MISSIONARIES IN THE UNITED STATES